DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 427 863 PS 027 356

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TITLE	Head Start Goes to School. Head Start--Public School Transition Project. 1992-1997 Final Evaluation Report.
INSTITUTION	Arizona State Univ., Tempe. Morrison Inst. for Public Policy.; Southwest Human Development, Inc., Phoenix, AZ.
SPONS AGENCY	Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (DHHS), Washington, DC. Project Head Start. (DHHS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1998-12-00
NOTE	103p.; For 1995-1996 Evaluation Report, see ED 420 430.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Development; Child Development Centers; Child Health; Compensatory Education; Disadvantaged Youth; Early Childhood Education; Health Services; Low Income Groups; Mental Health; Parent Participation; *Preschool Children; Program Evaluation; *School Readiness; *Transitional Programs; Welfare Services
IDENTIFIERS	Arizona; Project Head Start

ABSTRACT

The Arizona Head Start-Public School Transition Project was one of 31 federally created programs designed to improve low-income children's transition from Head Start to public schools through the third grade, making earlier interventions, and promoting continuity with the participation of parents, teachers, and community members. The Transition concept has promoted four primary family-centered services: developmentally appropriate education, health provision, family development, and parent involvement. Two consecutive cohorts of children entering kindergarten at different years were studied, with outcomes for children in the Transition treatment condition compared to those for children in a comparison condition. Analyses were conducted of outcomes for children, families, system and policy. Overall findings at the 5-year completion of the project indicate that the Transition Project produced few cognitive, social, or emotional results for Transition children, nor did it produce significant differences between Transition and Comparison families. The Project did influence systemic changes in educational practices and collaborative relationships. Based on findings, recommendations for agency and public policy include the following: programs should focus on attainable goals; accountability for results should be the cornerstone of new program designs and evaluations; future Health and Human Services (HHS) research should focus on determining the long-term effects of the Head Start Program, not solely on new demonstration projects; and new programs should align their goals with Welfare-to-Work reforms. (Three appendices include a summary of data collection instruments, a comparison of school practices and services as of 1996, and a summary of results of longitudinal findings and analysis.) (JPB)

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Head Start – Public School Transition Project

1992 – 1997

Final Evaluation Report

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express appreciation to the many individuals in the participating schools who have made this research possible. To all the teachers and administrators who graciously cooperated with our testing program, classroom observations, and who participated in focus groups, thank you for your time and patience. We fully understand that without your support, this study would not have been viable.

Also crucial to the success of the evaluation and to whom we are thankful, are the Transition and Comparison families who gave their consent to participate and continued to do so throughout the study to the extent of their availability.

We are grateful to the Transition Project team at Southwest Human Development, Inc., especially Sandy Foreman, Transition Project manager, whose investment in the Project and evaluation benefited both greatly. Thanks also go to the family advocates who completed annual surveys and shared their views about the Project's strengths and challenges in focus groups.

At the national level, we would like to thank Martha Phillips, National Transition Project manager, for her tireless efforts to answer questions and trouble shoot on so many issues related to the national data as well as her speed and good humor in doing so. Thanks also to Carl Brezausek, co-director of Information Systems/Data Analysis, for his efforts to deliver our data and the myriad tasks that accomplishing that entailed.

We extend our appreciation to our colleagues at Arizona State University for all their help. Thanks go to Beth Jones, Mathematics lecturer in the College of Liberal Arts, for her statistical consulting and analysis of results from the early days of the Transition Project to the very end. Thanks also to Mary Stafford, assistant professor in Psychology in Education, who conducted analysis of the child data, wrote part or all of the child results sections for three annual reports, and consulted on the longitudinal analysis. And thanks to Howard Sullivan, professor of Psychology in Education for evaluation guidance early on.

Finally, we offer our sincere appreciation to present and past colleagues from the Morrison Institute who have provided various support to this study over its five years. To Andrea Greene, former Transition evaluation director, for her fine work in bringing the evaluation from inception to mid-point. To our attrition coordinator, Celeste Minzikah for continually giving her best efforts to find families who left the study schools and for providing translation services. To former graduate associate, Kathleen Shaw, for her contribution to the analysis and initial draft of this report as well as years of effort on the Project. Thanks to former graduate associate Polly Whitman Ahern and over 15 child and family data collectors for their hard work. To the Morrison Institute staff and Rob Melnick, director, thanks for contributing your time, energy and insights into discussions and drafts of this report.

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Head Start – Public School Transition Project

1992 – 1997

Final Evaluation Report

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December 1998

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Executive Summary

In 1991, a federal law created the *National Head Start-Public School Early Childhood Transition Demonstration Project.* This program was designed to involve multiple sites across the country, with three objectives: First, each site would develop strategies in which Head Start, parents, local education agencies, and other community agencies would jointly and collaboratively plan and implement a comprehensive and continuous program of services for low-income children and their families, beginning in Head Start and continuing in the public schools through third grade. Second, each site would develop strategies to support parent involvement in their children's education. Third, results of the project would test the hypothesis that the benefits of Head Start could be maintained by extending the program's comprehensive services into kindergarten through third grade.

Arizona was among 30 states that, along with the Navajo Nation, served as demonstration sites for the project. Southwest Human Development, Inc. (SWHD), a social service agency and Head Start grantee in Central Phoenix, was awarded the Arizona Project. SWHD contracted with the Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University to conduct an independent evaluation.

Each site evaluator collected the national core data set as specified by the national research coordinating team—Civitan International Research Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Each site's national core data were collected from local participants (children, parents, teachers, principals, and family advocates). Because local evaluation plans reflected the goals of local Transition Projects, national data were supplemented by data derived from a combination of other published and locally-developed measures.

During the course of the Arizona Project, which began in Fall 1992, three annual reports and one set of case studies were completed by the local evaluators. This final document presents the overall results obtained for the Arizona site of Head Start Transition at the completion of the Project.

Transition Components

Planning for the Arizona Transition Project occurred at a time of growing consensus among experts that the educational and developmental needs of children would be better met by smoothing the transition from preschool to public school, making earlier rather than later interventions, and promoting continuity with the participation of parents, teachers, and community members. Program continuity would allow the families of young school age children to focus on nurturing and strengthening relationships rather than on repeatedly adapting to new educational and service systems.

The Transition concept is supported by four primary family-centered services: education, health, family development, and parent involvement. The components are described below:

- **Promoting and supporting education practices, curriculum, and materials that are developmentally appropriate:** Developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) are defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children as "more active learning approaches based on a broader interpretation of children's educational needs and abilities rather than undue emphasis on rote learning and whole-group instruction of narrowly-defined academic skills." Among the strategies used in the Transition Project to promote DAP are the development of individual education plans for each child, the use of related classroom materials, and the opportunity for teachers to engage in intensive professional development. DAP, however, is not a curriculum, but a philosophy.

- **Providing-or linking children and families with-needed physical health, mental health, and dental services:** Many educators favor linking health and social services to schools because academic achievement is likely to be impaired if students—or their parents—are chronically hungry, ill, or preoccupied with practical or personal problems. To assist Transition Project participants with such problems, "family advocates" (social service workers) were provided at each of the Transition schools. All of the advocates were bilingual.

- **Providing services to support and enhance family development:** The most important conduits of services to families were the family advocates based at each Transition school site. Family advocates each worked with about 30 to 40 families to identify strengths and needs and to create individual action plans for addressing them. Family advocate activities included making home visits, providing parent training, offering referrals for services and educational programs, and providing direct services such as food or clothing.

- **Promoting parent involvement in their children's education, both at home and at school:** Research documents a strong association between parental involvement and child academic achievement. The Transition Project made special attempts to extend parent participation in school at all levels: parents were encouraged to participate in advisory boards and volunteer in Head Start and elementary school classrooms; parent meetings and events were hosted by the schools; and teachers and family advocates visited children's homes. Advocates also translated for parents and school staff, teachers suggested learning activities for families to share at home, and advocates offered parenting classes as well as links to GED, ESL, and vocational classes.

Summary of Results

The Transition Project utilized the quasi-experimental approach of the national study, which was designed to compare two separate groups composed of children and their families. Both groups had earlier participated in the Head Start program, but once in public school the treatment group received Transition Project services while the Comparison group did not. Two consecutive cohorts of children and families were studied: Cohort 1 children entered kindergarten in Fall 1992; Cohort 2 children entered kindergarten in Fall 1993.

The Arizona Project recruited students from a total of six schools—two in each of three central Phoenix elementary districts (Balsz, Creighton, and Osborn). Within each district, one of the schools was randomly designated the Transition site; the other the Comparison site. The Arizona Project provided services only to Transition School classrooms in which Transition participants were located. Data were gathered for all former Head Start children and families participating in the study.

The Arizona Project's local evaluation plan was dependent upon the national design, but was customized to address issues of specific concern to the Arizona Project. The design was structured around a set of questions formulated through a content analysis of the project proposal, discussions with consortium members, and the Evaluation Advisory Panel. The resulting 12 evaluation questions were aligned with desired program outcomes and fell under the major categories of children, families, system, and policy. For this report, a longitudinal analysis was undertaken using data collected from both cohorts during the length of the Project.

RESULTS FOR CHILDREN

All of the evaluation questions regarding outcomes for children hypothesized that the services provided through the Transition Project would result in greater gains by children in the Transition treatment condition than by those in the Comparison condition. The data, however, provide evidence that this hypothesis is not accurate. Relatively few differences exist between Transition and Comparison group children; those that occur are generally small and tend to favor the Comparison group as often as Transition.

On cognitive measures, longitudinal analysis reveals no differences between groups in reading performance by third grade. Final math scores show the Comparison group outperforming the Transition group in third grade, while the reverse was true at kindergarten. Vocabulary measures show the Transition group ahead of the Comparison group by third grade after starting out behind in kindergarten. The differences in both cases are small but significant.

On measures of social and emotional development, Transition group children also do not exceed Comparison children. Children in both groups were similarly positive in their attitudes toward school. Longitudinal analysis of social skills measures and behavior problems according to parents show no differences between groups. By third grade, however, teachers who completed similar surveys reported that Transition students exhibited more externalizing problems (such as aggression) than Comparison students. In fact, the overall score for behavior problems was significantly higher for the Transition group than those in the Comparison group, indicating a greater number of problem behaviors overall. Parent ratings of their child's health showed no difference between Transition and Comparison groups.

RESULTS FOR FAMILIES

The Transition Project hypothesized that Transition services would positively impact families in a number of ways—from helping families obtain basic assistance, to improving self-sufficiency, parenting skills, and communications, relationships, and involvement with the schools. The family background component of the Family Interview, however, revealed no consistent differences between the groups over the course of the study regarding enrollment in social services. And while families reported less use of public services by their children's third grade year, no differences appeared between treatment groups. Families also reported higher incomes and greater employment, but again there were no differences between treatment groups. Analysis of family risk factors also revealed no differences.

Regarding parent involvement in schools, results showed no differences in parenting skills between groups. In addition, there were no differences between groups in the types or frequency of communication and relationships with school staff, but Transition parents reported that their schools offered significantly more activities to parents than did Comparison parents. Similarly, Transition families were expected to have higher participation in literacy and English as a Second Language programs because of support made available to them, but the data revealed parallel participation in these activities.

POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS FOR RESULTS

Given the lack of strong findings each year of the Transition Project, it is not surprising to find few strong longitudinal differences by treatment group. Indeed, similar results have occurred at a majority of the other 30 state sites participating in the national Transition Project evaluation. A few cogent factors might explain the lack of strong effects. These include contamination of treatment, attrition, English language proficiency, measurement problems, limited statistical power, and lack of data about family need and intensity of service.

OTHER ANALYSES CONDUCTED

Because a number of confounding factors were identified as potential problems on the national core data set, local evaluators conducted additional analyses to determine whether previously untested factors might predict or explain some outcomes better than treatment group alone. This approach was also taken by other Transition Project site evaluations across the country. Analyses were conducted to understand the impact of attrition, family risk factors, and primary language. The role of other variables such as income, kindergarten test scores, and family involvement were also examined. Some findings did emerge, but given the extensive nature of the investigation, none were startling in their implications about children and families.

SYSTEM AND POLICY RESULTS

Qualitative data provide a picture of where and how systemic changes occurred, how collaborative partnerships worked, and what future attempts at collaboration can gain from this experience. From this data, substantial evidence indicates the Transition Project produced noticeable effects on both the public school system and the Head Start agency involved. While most of the data assessing systemic change were collected only at Transition schools, trends still can be gleaned from the data. Among the findings:

In many cases, transition services became better coordinated for families. This happened when collaboration occurred among advocates, public school teachers, Head Start teachers, and social service agencies. Coordination was most apparent when continuity was maintained among all the parties involved. Transition teachers also gained understanding of the DAP approach and increased their DAP skills, primarily because the Project stood as a powerful model for effective teacher training. Moreover, the Transition Project effected widespread changes in the way teachers work with at-risk students, and it increased their sensitivity to diverse cultures. The former change was partially accomplished by training in DAP. Both changes, however, were largely expedited by the introduction into classrooms of bilingual and neighborhood-based advocates. Through the advocates' efforts to make teachers more comfortable with home visits and parents more comfortable in the classroom, an environment of mutual understanding between teachers and families developed. This led, in some cases, to improved parent involvement. Increased sensitivity to cultures also spread school-wide due to the Transition Project.

Some of the changes may be short-term. Without advocates in the classrooms, home visits by teachers and other staff will diminish. And though some schools already have a social service worker on staff with some responsibilities similar to those of an advocate, the case loads these staff members carry are many times higher than those of advocates, so the intensity of services to families will undoubtedly suffer, as will coordination of services in individual classrooms.

Other changes may be longer term. Because of the collaborative and partnering experiences that Transition has provided, lines of communication have been opened between school staff and other agencies, and a willingness has been fostered among some staff to consider alternative solutions to enigmatic problems.

COLLABORATION

A good deal was learned from the Project about working with other agencies toward a common goal. In addition, the Arizona Transition Project benefitted from relationships with the Transition schools through existing Head Start programs at the schools. Still, much variation occurred among the three Transition schools.

One of the primary factors that influenced success in working with other agencies was the readiness of the partners. One school entered the Project more ready than the others in terms of DAP training, existing links with social services, and Transition philosophy. Less time was needed by this school to surmount barriers and move forward with collaborative efforts. The less-ready Transition schools also developed collaborative relationships, but their efforts required more communication and patience.

Among the most important barriers to collaboration for the Transition Project were staff turnover among family advocates—a situation that creates the potential for breakdown in communication between groups; expansion of the Transition Project to new teachers every year—a factor that served to forestall significant buildup of momentum for Transition; and knowledge that the Project would lose its funding at the end of five years. Given these factors, the Transition Project collaboration was probably as successful as it could be.

Ultimately, both Southwest Human Development and the public schools involved became more aware of the benefits and pitfalls of collaborative endeavors as a result of the Transition Project. SWHD is currently applying its experience to a state-funded project that requires collaboration with other community-based service providers in developing a new child care center for low-income working families.

As a result of successful collaboration some program "blurring" also occurred, and the services of Head Start and Head Start Transition became indistinguishable to the beneficiaries. This should be considered a symptom of success.

EFFECTS OF TRANSITION ON PUBLIC POLICIES

The final goal of the Transition Project was to impact state policy with the results of the Project. At this date, there is no evidence that this has occurred, but given how public policy is set, it may be unreasonable to expect one project's results to be sufficiently powerful to stimulate any changes in the short term.

A better way to affect state policy may be through a coalition of organizations with similar goals. Transition Project personnel are currently assisting two such coalitions by applying the experiences they gained from the Project.

Conclusions

In summary, the Transition Project produced few cognitive, social, or emotional results for Transition children, nor did it produce significant differences between Transition and Comparison families. The Project did, however, influence systemic changes in educational practices and in collaborative relationships. The public schools' experiences with collaboration may prove to be the greatest long-term benefit of the Project.

Summary of Recommendations

A number of recommendations are offered. Some recommendations relate to internal (agency policy), others relate to public policy. Both are shown here:

INTERNAL POLICY (Service Delivery) RECOMMENDATIONS:

- SWHD managers should revisit hiring, training, and supervising practices to determine whether they are sufficient to support their advocates' work. Some advocates under-utilized or were not uniformly familiar with some services, specifically those related to employability and employment.

- Program managers should determine what is a working definition of an effective family advocate, what are expectations for advocates in responding to clients and supervisors, and what are the consequences for advocates who do not prove effective. These steps will help satisfy increased demands for program accountability.

- Future program managers should determine which parents are most likely to participate at a high level, and then keep records of service provision and intensity to uncover reasons behind results. This will help programs make the best use of available services.

- Program managers should continue to seek better service continuity for families and teachers. One positive strategy may be "looping," which keeps a teacher and advocate with the same set of students (and families) through more than one grade level before looping them back to an earlier grade to pick up a new set of students.

- Managers should reconsider how advocates allocate time. Although paperwork and meetings are essential, an effective balance must be struck between time spent on administrative tasks and time spent providing direct service. The goal should be to maximize staff contact with families.

PUBLIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- RFP evaluation processes and standards should be reformed to favor programs that provide intensive services.
- Program designs should focus on attainable goals.
- Accountability for results should be the cornerstone of new program designs and evaluation.
- The value of large-scale demonstration projects must be weighed against the expense and associated threats to validity.
- Future HHS research should focus on determining the long-term effects of the Head Start Program, not solely on new demonstration projects.
- New programs should align their goals with Welfare-to-Work reforms.

Summary of Findings...

...FROM TRANSITION PROJECT EVALUATION

Evaluation Question	Finding
Children	
1. Do Head Start (HS) children in Transition classrooms maintain and/or show gains to a greater degree than HS children in Comparison classrooms on the following indicators:	
a) cognitive skills	a) differences on standardized measures for math favor Comparison; differences on vocabulary favor Transition; no significant differences on reading
b) social and emotional development	b) few differences favor Comparison
c) general health	c) no significant differences
d) adjustment to school?	d) no significant differences
2. Do HS children in Transition classrooms exhibit more positive attitudes toward school than HS children in Comparison classrooms?	no significant differences
3. Do HS children in Transition classrooms experience a smoother transition and better continuity of programming from HS to kindergarten and from one primary grade to the next than HS children in Comparison classrooms?*	evidence of more early childhood programming and focus on continuity at Transition schools
Families	
4. Do Transition families receive more social service support through the public school system and show more evidence of stability and self-sufficiency than Comparison families?	evidence of more services; no significant differences on stability or self-sufficiency
5. Do Transition families show better parenting skills and have more involvement in and support for education than Comparison families?	no significant differences
6. Do parents in Transition schools participate in and complete more literacy and English as a Second Language classes and workshops than parents in Comparison schools?	no significant differences

Summary of Findings...

...FROM TRANSITION PROJECT EVALUATION

Evaluation Question	Finding
7. Do parents in Transition schools perceive home-school communication to be more effective and satisfactory than parents in Comparison schools?	no significant differences
System	
8. Do Transition schools provide a more coordinated service delivery system (i.e., continuous and comprehensive) than Comparison schools?*	differences favor Transition schools
9. Do Transition schools provide a more developmentally appropriate curriculum, more satisfactory communication strategies, better staff development, and more opportunities for parent participation than Comparison schools?	differences on Developmentally Appropriate Practice favor Transition; no significant differences on communications; some differences on opportunities for parent participation favor Transition
10. Are Transition school primary level teachers more skilled in working with the special needs of at-risk children and families than Comparison school teachers?*	evidence of cultural and linguistic sensitivity in planning and implementation at Transition schools
11. What does a successful collaborative process look like?*	evidence of collaboration; barriers identified and collaborative strategies learned; positive experience promotes future collaboration
Policy	
12. Have the results of this Project affected state and local level policies and level of fiscal support that reflect a comprehensive plan for addressing child and family needs in a holistic manner?	not at completion of Project; however lessons learned from Transition Project will be applied to coalitions supporting child and family issues which may affect future policy

*These questions rely on multiple data sources. Direct comparisons are not always possible as some data were not available for Comparison group schools.

Chapter 1

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Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

One child in five in the United States lives in poverty, a circumstance that places this child at a serious educational disadvantage. Public schools have sought to mitigate the problem by equalizing opportunities for children regardless of social and economic factors. While these efforts have proven successful for millions of children and young adults, the fact remains that too many students drop out or leave school without the skills necessary to compete successfully in the market place—and their numbers are disproportionately high among poor and minority groups.

Head Start was created in 1965 as a means of breaking the cycle of poverty for young children. Early supporters believed that education was the key to achieving this goal, therefore the first Head Start programs typically centered on summer preschools that were supplemented by medical, dental, mental health, and social services. With early exposure to educational opportunity and social services, the disadvantaged children who participated in these programs were expected to enter public school "ready to learn."

Although Head Start began as a subdivision of the Office of Economic Opportunity, it was transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in the early 1970s where today it is overseen by the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). The move to ACYF reflected increased emphasis on family and community involvement as well as a commitment to developing innovative ways for improving Head Start's effectiveness.

More than 15 million children have participated in Head Start during the past three decades at a total cost of approximately $31 billion.[1] Currently, 830,000 students attend Head Start—almost all enrolled for nine months. While the Head Start program has undergone numerous changes in its thirty-plus years, public regard for the program has remained high. Nevertheless, some controversy over the program exists. Some politicians want to increase funding in order to serve all eligible children every year (approximately two million); others suggest funding cuts because of questions about the program's effectiveness.

In an attempt to understand Head Start's impact, HHS commissioned a comprehensive literature review to analyze existing research on the program. The authors of the resulting meta-analysis considered a total of 210 research articles published between Head Start's inception and 1985.[2] They concluded that Head Start students usually showed gains in intelligence, achievement, and social behavior and attitudes during the preschool program, but these gains diminished when measured one to three years later—an effect commonly referred to as the "fade out effect." And though a few studies indicated that Head Start graduates were less likely than peers to be retained in a grade or placed in special education classes, the authors determined that to more confidently assess Head Start outcomes, large-scale longitudinal evaluations were needed.

The evidence of a fade-out of benefits and the call for more research were important motivational factors that preceded the passage of the 1991 federal law creating the *National Head Start-Public School Early Childhood Transition Demonstration Project*. This new program was designed to involve multiple sites across the country, with objectives (as stated in the July 11, 1991 Federal Register) to be threefold. First, each site would develop strategies in which Head Start, parents, local education agencies (LEAs), and other community agencies would jointly and collaboratively plan and implement a comprehensive and continuous program of services for low-income children and their families, beginning in Head Start and continuing in the public schools through third grade. Second, each site would develop strategies to support parents involvement in their children's education. Third, results of the project would test the hypothesis that the benefits of Head Start could be maintained by extending the program's comprehensive services into kindergarten through third grade.[3]

Arizona was among 30 states that, along with the Navajo Nation, served as demonstration sites for the project. Southwest Human Development (SWHD), a social service agency and Head Start grantee in Central Phoenix, was awarded the Arizona Project. As a requirement of participation, each Transition site hired an independent evaluator to conduct a local evaluation. For its evaluation, SWHD subcontracted with the Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University.

As a condition of involvement, each site evaluator was required to collect the national core data set as specified by the national research coordinating team—Civitan International Research Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Each of the 31 Transition Project sites and evaluators also participated with the national research coordinating team in the National Transition Demonstration Consortium, whose goal was to facilitate planning and communication regarding the Project and the national evaluation.

Each site's national core data were collected from local participants (children, parents, teachers, principals, and family advocates) every year and then sent to Civitan where it was analyzed and returned to the sites for use in the local evaluations. Because local evaluation plans reflected the goals of local Transition Projects, national data were supplemented by data derived from a combination of other published and locally-developed measures.

During the course of the Arizona Project, which began in Fall 1992, three annual reports and one set of case studies were completed by the local evaluators.[4] This final document presents the overall results obtained for the Arizona site of Head Start Transition at the completion of the Project, and is broken down as follows: Chapter 1 provides a brief history of the Transition Project, and includes descriptions of the major program components and the quasi-experimental designs and methods for both the national and local evaluations. Chapter 2 summarizes results for the Arizona site based on analysis of data according to the national evaluation plan, plus other analyses. Chapter 3 presents results related to the systemic change and collaboration goals of the Transition Project ,which were the major focus of the local evaluation plan. Chapter 4 discusses results and examines public policy implications of the Project based on local findings.

Transition Components, Laws and Related Research

A diverse body of research provides strong argument for smoothing transitions between Head Start and public schools. This section describes the rationale behind the transition concept, presents the legislative context, and discusses the Transition components and relevant research.

SUSTAINING CONTINUITY

Planning for the Arizona Transition Project occurred at a time of growing consensus among experts that the educational and developmental needs of children would be better met by smoothing the transition from preschool to public school and by making earlier rather than later interventions. Today, many experts also agree that the early childhood years should be treated as a continuum, and that early programs and services should be sustained with the consistent participation of parents, teachers, and community members. Program continuity, it is argued, allows the families of young school age children to focus on nurturing and strengthening their relationships rather than on repeatedly adapting to new educational and service systems. The "guiding principles" for continuous effective interventions include high quality, comprehensiveness (both of services and family involvement), and extension over time.[5]

Historically, however, public schools have not embraced the idea of continuity and smooth transitions, even for children entering kindergarten. The US Department of Education surveyed nationally representative samples of 830 school districts and 1,169 schools to assess the incidence of transition activities between preschools and kindergarten, and found that, of those surveyed, only 10 percent reported systematic communication between kindergarten teachers and previous teachers or caretakers, only about 12 percent of schools said they coordinated curricula, and fewer than half hosted a formal visitation program for parents of incoming children. In addition, "high levels of child difficulty adjusting to the academic demands of kindergarten" were reported by 33 percent of schools in which the majority of children were poor, as compared to 6 percent of schools in which less than a quarter of students were poor.[6] Given these circumstances, Transition sites were intended to foster the following conditions:

- direct communication among teachers between and within institutions
- transfer of children's records with developmental information
- joint in-service training for teachers and other staff members
- coordination of curricula for continuity among programs
- activities to prepare children and parents for transitions
- advance visits to new classrooms for children and parents
- administrative cooperation and coordination

These form the essence of the transition concept. At the national level, efforts to smooth transitions for children and families between systems and from grade to grade in the public schools were to be considered effective if the following resulted:

- Children had positive attitudes toward school and were motivated to do well in school.
- Parents and other key adults in young children's lives displayed positive attitudes toward their children's school program and were active partners (along with school personnel) in children's learning.
- Teachers and principals recognized individual differences in children's academic and social-emotional maturity, positively valued cultural and linguistic diversity, and provided developmentally appropriate experiences within the class and school setting.
- Positive and mutually supportive relationships occurred among families, school personnel, social and health service providers, and communities concerning the well-being and education of young children.[7]

To facilitate successful transitions at each Transition Project site, representatives of the parents, the schools, and the local communities served on local governing boards where they guided program design, implementation, and oversight. These representatives ensured that services were appropriate for diverse ethnic groups, for those with disabilities, and for the various participating organizations.

FEDERAL AND STATE LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Support for Head Start has been evident at both the Federal and state level. In 1994, the U.S. Congress re-authorized both the Head Start Act and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), reinforcing support for the Transition concept of early childhood education. In July 1996, the ACYF announced that an additional $35 million would be made available to Head Start grantees as increases beyond their ongoing Head Start grants, beginning with programs re-funded on July 1, 1996 and continuing with monthly re-funding through June 1,1997.

In November 1996, the first comprehensive revision in 20 years of Head Start performance standards was published. In some respects the new standards were stricter, for example cutting the time period in half for completing screenings of each child's developmental, sensory, and behavioral levels. In other cases the new standards bowed to local laws, for example deferring to state or municipal standards regarding tuberculosis screenings for volunteer Head Start workers.

More recent national-level government pronouncements bode well for the Transition concept and other innovative educational programs. President Clinton, in his State of the Union address of January 1997, announced that improving the nation's educational system would be the central theme of his second administration. Mentioning the Head Start Program by name, he set explicit goals for the year 2000, stating that every child should read by the age of eight and have access to the Internet by age 12.

The 1998 Head Start reauthorization was signed by President Clinton on October 21. With an increased budget of $312 million targeted toward expansion and improvements in quality, research and specific programs such as Migrant and Early Head Start, congressional and presidential support for Head Start remain steady.

On the state level, Arizona has demonstrated its own commitment to transition practices. In March 1996, the Arizona Head Start Collaboration Project was initiated by the Arizona State Head Start Association, a representative body composed of Head Start directors and parents from Southwest Human Development and six other regional Head Start grantees and tribal agencies in the state. Under the Arizona Governor's Division for Children, the Head Start Collaboration Project, which was made possible with funding from the HHS, has created a formal partnership of state government agencies, Head Start programs, and other interested parties as an infrastructure for coordinating policy, planning, and service delivery in the areas of health, child care, welfare, education, literacy, and activities related to children with disabilities.

Recently-enacted welfare reform legislation on both the national and state levels, however, will impact services to vulnerable families. The "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996" ended federal guarantees of assistance to the poor and created capped block grants to states called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Arizona's EMPOWER (Employing and Moving people Off Welfare and Encouraging Responsibility) Program, which took effect in November 1995 and runs through 2002, is less restrictive than TANF in certain respects. A Block Grant Committee was established in the state House of Representatives to shape policies and legislation, and to explore how much flexibility is permitted individual states under the TANF block grant.

In 1998, two pieces of legislation supporting low income and at-risk families were passed. Kids Care, a bill to provide health care to the children of the working poor, and Healthy Families, a child abuse prevention program that identifies families at great risk of abuse and intervenes with an intensive home visiting program. Although conditions for children, overall, are considered poor in Arizona,[8] and legislation supportive of children and family issues within the last ten years have not been prevalent, the 1998 laws represent increased support for struggling families.

COMPONENTS OF THE TRANSITION PROJECT

The Transition concept is supported by four primary family-centered services: education, health, family development, and parent involvement. While some of these services were offered as a matter of policy at Transition and Comparison schools prior to the Transition Project, during the Project all four services were provided at all three Transition schools, with certain variations dictated by the needs and preferences of individual schools. Examples for each component follow.

What is Developmentally Appropriate Practice?

Developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) are defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as "more active learning approaches based on a broader interpretation of children's educational needs and abilities rather than undue emphasis on rote learning and whole-group instruction of narrowly-defined academic skills."[9] DAP is not a curriculum, but a philosophy based upon child development research and learning theory. DAP advocates believe that young children are intrinsically motivated to learn, and that educational practices are most effective if they support a child's natural tendency to explore and experiment.

DAP differs from other approaches to teaching in a number of ways. The child is not viewed simply as the recipient of knowledge transmitted by others. Instead the child actively constructs knowledge through direct experience with the environment. Instructional decision making in the DAP classroom is based upon knowledge of child development and what is age appropriate for children as well as what is individually appropriate for a particular child. The role defined for teachers is also different. Traditional educators typically choose learning experiences for their students and rely heavily on formal instruction. DAP-oriented teachers, however, often act as facilitators, creating a range of opportunities that allow children to direct their own learning. While most teachers would fall somewhere between completely traditional or completely DAP-oriented, the following vignettes help illustrate differences between traditional and developmentally appropriate teaching styles by contrasting some of the attributes commonly associated with each approach.

- The **traditional classroom** is quiet and orderly, consistent with school rules posted on the bulletin board. Supplies are stored in closed cabinets to be used at the teacher's discretion. Students sit in rows at individual desks facing the teacher and blackboard.

This morning they are finishing worksheets that complement the basal readers they use in their assigned, ability-based reading groups. They occasionally raise their hands if they need the teacher's help, but will continue working until the teacher tells them reading period is over. Next they will rehearse their multiplication tables as a group, then the teacher will present a social studies lesson to the whole class.

- In the **developmentally appropriate classroom,** pupils proposed and voted on the rules posted in the room. There is often a high level of activity. While small groups of students gather around learning centers and work with equipment, others talk among themselves as they solve problems structured by the teacher. Materials for children's use are grouped on low, open shelves and students use them during designated activities. The teacher continually moves among groups, asking questions or making suggestions to facilitate the children's learning. Later the teacher may have the students write about their experiences or research a related topic.

- **Promoting and supporting education practices, curriculum, and materials that are developmentally appropriate.**

While DAP is a common approach among preschool practitioners, and support is growing in the primary grades, some differences of opinion exist regarding its use in the primary level school setting. Research, for example, indicates that traditional academic environments may result in higher academic achievement as measured by standardized tests. Emotional costs, however, may accompany this higher achievement,[10] and some research indicates that traditional instruction alone is not necessary for academic success. DAP's beneficial effects, according to its advocates, include less stress, greater creativity, more self-confidence in cognitive skills, and sustained motivation and interest in school. The Transition Project encouraged use of DAP in the classroom, and also sponsored intensive professional development for teachers, equipment purchases related to DAP, and parent training.

The three Transition schools implemented the DAP component in a number of ways. Encanto, for example, provided well-organized DAP trainings for teachers, supplied a wide variety of literature and other materials for classrooms, and also placed special emphasis on arranging for teachers to visit classrooms that featured multi-age and bilingual programs, the use portfolios for assessment, and other developmentally appropriate approaches. Machan held workshops and seminars on bilingual literacy, problem-solving, performance assessments, and the Project Approach to curriculum planning, and also made funds available for the purchase of computers, furniture, and other equipment and supplies. Crockett also offered workshops, the assistance of consultants in classrooms, and time off for teachers to visit other classes. In addition, some Crockett teachers began the practice of "looping," which keeps them with the same class of students for two consecutive years.

- **Providing-or linking children and families with-needed physical health, mental health, and dental services.**

Many educators favor linking health and social services to schools because academic achievement is likely to be impaired if students—or their parents—are chronically hungry, ill, or preoccupied with practical or personal problems. To assist Transition Project participants with such problems, "family advocates" (social service workers) were provided at each of the Transition schools. All of the advocates were bilingual.

The health delivery system for the Transition Project was modeled after that used by SWHD's Head Start program. It offered treatment and referrals related to physical, mental, and dental health needs of participating families. A nurse coordinated health services with school nurses and consulted with family advocates and families about health issues. The Project often provided major dental care through cooperating dentists when needed. As the pool of recipients grew over time, all three Transition schools worked to make this component more comprehensive and efficient. Among the steps taken were increased efforts to ensure that immunizations, vision and hearing screenings, fluoride treatments, and other health and dental services were provided on a timely basis.

- **Providing services to support and enhance family development.**

The most important conduits of services to families were the family advocates based at each Transition school site. Family advocates each worked with about 30 to 40 families to identify strengths and needs and to create individual action plans for addressing them. Family advocate activities included making home visits, providing parent training, offering referrals for services and educational programs, and providing direct services such as food or clothing.

As the Transition Project moved into its middle years and the parameters of its family service mission were repeatedly stretched and redefined, each advocate's flexibility and creativity was continually challenged. Among other things, advocates represented a bridge between cultures, often serving as translators, enrolling family members in ESL classes or encouraging classroom teachers to learn rudimentary Spanish or enlist Spanish-speaking aides.

- **Promoting parent involvement in their children's education, both at home and at school.**

Research has consistently documented a strong association between parental involvement and children's academic achievement. The Transition Project, therefore, made special attempts to support and extend parent participation in school at all levels. Several strategies were employed: parents were encouraged to serve on advisory boards and volunteer in both Head Start and elementary school classrooms; special parent meetings and events were hosted by the schools; and before the school year began, teachers and family advocates visited children's homes.

Advocates also provided translation services for parents and school staff. Teachers suggested learning activities for families to share at home and ways to enhance their children's learning. Family advocates and community organizations encouraged parents to model learning, and also offered parenting skills classes as well as links to GED, ESL, and vocational classes.

A variety of activities were offered to attract parents to the school and involve them in the education of their children. At Machan School, for example, a Thanksgiving potluck meal was scheduled to be held each year at lunchtime in order to allow working parents to share the meal with their children.

Evaluation Design

The Arizona Head Start - Public School Transition Project utilized the quasi-experimental approach of the national study, which was designed to compare two separate groups composed of children and their families. Both groups had earlier participated in the Head Start program, but once in public school the treatment group (called the Transition group) received Transition Project services while the Comparison group did not. In accordance with the national study design, two consecutive cohorts of children and families were studied: Cohort 1 children entered kindergarten in Fall 1992; Cohort 2 children entered kindergarten in Fall 1993.

The National Head Start-Public School Transition Demonstration Project gave each local Transition Project grantee the latitude to design a unique service delivery model and determine the number of schools, school districts, and students involved. The Arizona Project elected to recruit students from a total of six schools—two schools in each of three central Phoenix elementary districts. Within each district, one of the schools was randomly designated the Transition site; the other the Comparison site. The districts and schools, by treatment condition are shown below. At the school level, the Arizona Project, like all other Transition Project sites, provided services to each classroom in which Transition participants were located. Data, however, were only gathered for former Head Start children and families participating in the study.

	Transition	Comparison
Balsz Elementary District:	Crockett School	Balsz School
Creighton Elementary District:	Machan School	Papago School
Osborn Elementary District:	Encanto School	Longview School

The Arizona Project's local evaluation plan was dependent upon the national design and included the requirement to collect information for the national core data set. The local plan, however, was customized to address issues of specific concern to the Arizona Project, and was structured around a set of questions formulated through a content analysis of the project proposal, discussions with consortium members, and review and critique by an Evaluation Advisory Panel consisting of researchers from the participating districts. The resulting 12 evaluation questions, listed below, are aligned with desired program outcomes and fall under the major categories of children, families, system, and policy.

Children

1. Do Head Start (HS) children in Transition classrooms maintain and/or show gains to a greater degree than children in Comparison classrooms on the following indicators: cognitive skills; social skills; emotional development; general health; and positive adjustment to the public school setting?

2. Do HS children in Transition classrooms exhibit more positive attitudes toward school than children in Comparison classrooms?

3. Do HS children in Transition classrooms experience a smoother transition and better continuity of programming from HS to kindergarten and from one primary grade to the next than HS children in Comparison classrooms?

Families

4. Do Transition families receive more social service support through the public school system and show more evidence of stability and self-sufficiency than Comparison families?

5. Do Transition parents show better parenting skills and have more involvement and support for education than Comparison families?

6. Do parents in Transition schools participate in and complete more literacy and English as a Second Language classes and workshops than parents in Comparison classrooms?

7. Do parents in Transition schools perceive home-school communication to be more effective and satisfactory than parents in Comparison schools?

System

8. Do Transition schools provide a more coordinated service delivery system (i.e., continuous and comprehensive) than Comparison schools?

9. Do Transition schools provide a more developmentally appropriate curriculum, more satisfactory communication strategies, better staff development, and more opportunities for parent participation than Comparison schools?

10. Are Transition school primary level teachers more skilled at working with the special needs of at-risk children and families than Comparison school teachers?

11. What does a successful collaborative process look like?

Policy

12. Did the results of this project affect state and local level public policies and the level of fiscal support that reflect a comprehensive plan for addressing child and family needs in a holistic manner?

Instruments and Data Collection

The local evaluation relied on two categories of data collection and analysis: 1) the national core data set that is included in the national Head Start Transition study, and 2) data on other matters of specific interest to the Arizona Project. These data, both quantitative and qualitative, were intended to determine the effects of Transition services by comparing attributes of the Transition group with those of the Comparison group.

While the national data set primarily gathered quantitative information about children and families, the local data set focused on more qualitative data regarding the Project's impacts on schools and the Head Start program. Because the local evaluation's purpose was to learn more about the Project's systemic effects, much of the local data were collected only at Transition schools.

During the course of the study, five separate data collection cycles occurred for each cohort. Baseline data were collected during the fall of each cohort's kindergarten year. Most instruments were then re-administered every spring through each cohort's third grade year. Table 1.1 shows the wide range of data, both national and local, that were collected and analyzed during the study. Unless otherwise noted, instruments shown were administered during the fall of each cohort's kindergarten year, and the following four spring data collection cycles. It should be noted that this report does not profile all of the results generated by each instrument administered for the national data set, since some were never relevant to local evaluation questions. Descriptions of each of the instruments for which data are reported appear in Appendix A.

For the purposes of evaluation, all participants in the Transition Project were considered sources of data: children, families, teachers, family advocates, and principals. National core data and teacher ratings of students were collected from participants in both Transition and Comparison groups. Other local data related exclusively to the implementation of the Transition Project and were collected only from Transition school participants. A review of the data collection protocols follows.

CHILD TESTING

Child assessments of cognitive development were administered to children individually in school settings outside the classroom. The assessments were conducted by examiners trained specifically in their use. Six instruments were used: the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R)*; the Spanish language adaptation of the PPVT-R, the Test De Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody (TVIP); and four subtests of the *Woodcock-Johnson Achievement Tests-Revised* (WJ-22, letter-word recognition; WJ-23, passage comprehension; WJ-24, calculation; WJ-25, problem solving).

Table 1.1

DATA SETS ADMINISTERED AND ANALYZED

Child Data	**NATIONAL**	Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Revised (PPVT-R) [1] Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody (TVIP) [1,2] Woodcock Johnson – Revised subtests 22, 23, 24, 25 Writing Samples [3] What I think of School Child's Adjustment to School – Parent Social Skills Rating System – Parent and Teacher Versions Child Health – Parent
	LOCAL	Teacher Rating of Students
Family Data	**NATIONAL**	Family Involvement in Children's Learning [3] Parenting Dimensions Family Resource Scale Final Interview for Families[4]
	LOCAL	Local Family Interview Questions End-of-Year Summary of Family Services
System Data	**NATIONAL**	Assessment Profile ADAPT [3] Program Implementation Profile (PIP) – 1996 School Climate Survey – Parent, teacher, principal Annual Site Visit Reports
	LOCAL	Innovation Component Checklist – Transition Services Innovation Component Checklist – DAP Focus Groups Interviews with Principals – 1994, 1996 Observations/documentation of program activities Survey of Collaboration

[1] Administered to each cohort in kindergarten and grades 1 and 3

[2] Spanish version administered in kindergarten on recommendation of teacher along with English, until teacher judged that child's English proficiency was adequate

[3] Administered to each cohort in grades 2 and 3

[4] Administered to each cohorts in Spring of child's third grade year

Children whose primary language was English were tested with each of the English-language achievement instruments. Children whose primary language was Spanish were given only the TVIP and the PPVT until they were deemed ready by their teachers to take the *Woodcock-Johnson* tests in English. The Spanish-language tests were administered by a bilingual examiner.

FAMILY INTERVIEWS

Family interviews were conducted at baseline and each spring thereafter. Interviewers who conducted family interviews were trained by a member of the local evaluation team who had previously been trained by the National Research Coordinating Team. Interviewers used machine-scannable interview booklets included in the national core data set. Spanish-speaking parents were interviewed using the Spanish-language version of the interview, while bilingual parents were given the choice of Spanish or English.

All interviews were conducted at a time and place convenient to the family. Most parents preferred to be interviewed in their homes. Typically, the interviews took 45 to 60 minutes to complete, and parents who participated received a $20 money order and a note of thanks.

In some cases, families were not interviewed either because they declined, repeatedly canceled, or failed to keep interview appointments, or because they could not be reached after repeated attempts at contact. Thus, the possibility exists that interview data could be skewed by the "self-selection" of cooperating families.

SURVEYS

Surveys were completed by principals, teachers, and family advocates. Packages containing the survey instruments, instructions, and return envelopes were mailed out each spring with the request that they be returned within one month. Surveys not returned by that time were solicited by follow-up phone calls and/or personal notes.

CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Observations were made in the classrooms of participating teachers each spring. During the middle of the study (1994), the National Research Coordinating Team suggested that observations be limited to classrooms in which at least two children were participants of the study. This suggestion was incorporated by the local evaluation. All observations were conducted by a trained member of the evaluation team, and were scheduled at the individual teacher's convenience. Two instruments were used: the *Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs*, which was used from 1993 to 1997, and *A Developmentally Appropriate Practice Template (ADAPT)*, which was introduced in 1995 and used for the remainder of the study.

INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

Focus group meetings were held each spring to elicit qualitative information regarding the perspectives of various stakeholders in the Transition Project. The focus group methodology described by Stewart and Shamdasani (1990) was used in recruiting participants, designing questions, conducting the dialogue, and analyzing the resulting data. A member of the evaluation team acted as facilitator for the sessions, which lasted about two hours and were audio taped for later transcription. Interview protocols were developed by the evaluator with input from members of the Transition management team. Sessions were held with the following groups:

- Spanish-speaking and English-speaking parents of children enrolled in Transition classrooms from both cohorts and all three Transition schools
- Transition classroom teachers from Transition schools
- Transition family advocates and Head Start family advocates from Transition schools

Transition school principals were interviewed individually in 1994 and 1996. Interview questions covered family services, health services, parent involvement, and teacher training in developmentally appropriate practice. Comparison school principals were interviewed in spring of 1994 and 1996 to document existing programs and services at Comparison schools that most closely resembled Transition Project services. A list of those Transition-like services, as of 1996, is shown in Appendix B.

The lead evaluator attended key Transition Project meetings and events throughout the Project, usually in the role of a participant/observer. The evaluator also attended most monthly meetings of the Transition Team at each of the three Transition schools as well as the monthly meetings of the Transition Governing Board, and participated in Transition Management meetings with Southwest Head Start managers held approximately every six weeks. The evaluator also attended a variety of professional development workshops and conferences related to the Project. Minutes of all meetings and notes taken by the evaluator/observer were logged and analyzed as part of the qualitative data set. In addition, a review of the family advocate end-of-year summary sheets was conducted to document services to families in the Project.

Participants

Participants, for the purpose of this study, were former Head Start children and their families who, in Fall 1992 or Fall 1993, enrolled for kindergarten in one of the three Transition schools or one of the three Comparison schools. Participants, therefore, included both those who received Project services (Transition school participants), and those who did not (Comparison school participants). Furthermore, as teachers received Project services, they also were considered participants. Total participant numbers for whom data are available during the Project are shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Participant Counts for Each Data Collection Cycle, with Cohorts Combined

	Baseline Fall 1992/93			Spring 1 1993/94			Spring 2 1994/95			Spring 3 1995/96			Spring 4 1996/97		
	T	C	A	T	C	A	T	C	A	T	C	A	T	C	A
Families Interviewed	111	92		108	76	10	92	65	10	71	56	37	64	54	80
Children Tested	137	110		124	99		97	76	14	72	59	44	65	54	83
Teachers Surveyed				9	13		15	25		16	27		13	19	

Cohort 1 participant families were described demographically in the 1992-93 report of the Transition Project, while Cohort 2 participants were described in the 1993-94 report. Unlike Cohort 1, which showed nearly identical demographic profiles for its Transition and Comparison families, Cohort 2 showed major differences between groups.

The Transition group contained more than twice as many Hispanic families (82 percent) as the Comparison group; were twice as likely to speak Spanish at home (49 percent); included more respondents born outside the United States (mostly from Mexico); were more mobile; and had a lower median annual household income. The only statistically significant difference, however, was language spoken, an issue that is most relevant to the interpretation of child outcomes, and which has been taken into account statistically. Therefore, to increase the statistical power of the longitudinal analysis, the two cohorts were combined.

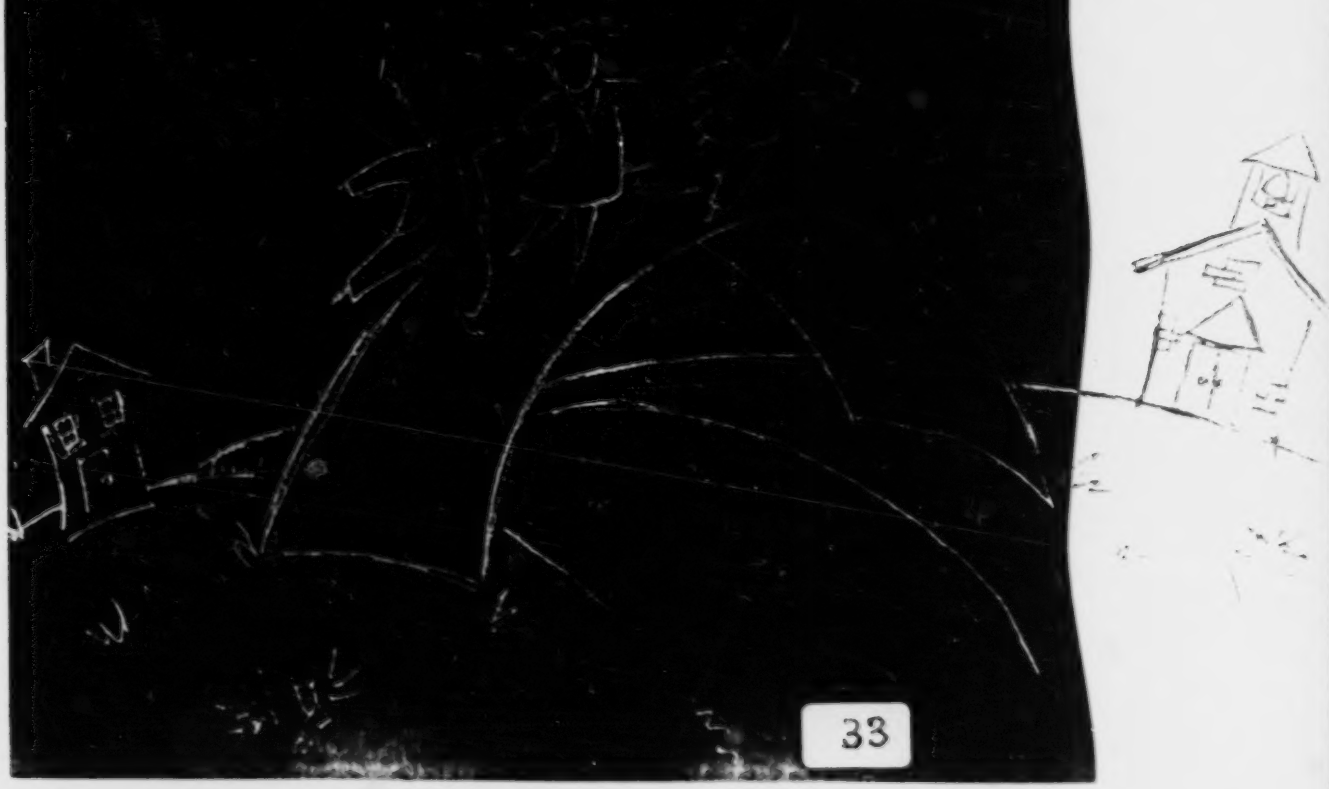
Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted on all quantitative data used in this report for two purposes. First, analysis was done in order to document the presence or absence of differences between Transition, Comparison, and sometimes Attrition group children and families. The analyses conducted for this purpose include ANOVA (analysis of variance), repeated measures ANOVA, and ANCOVA (analysis of covariance). Second, multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the importance of certain variables in outcomes for children.

Summaries of the annual and longitudinal results and analyses are shown in Table 2.1 and 2.2, respectively. Some of the longitudinal results from specific instruments are shown in other tables where differences exist or results are compelling. These tables are cross-referenced within Table 2.2. Additional statistical analyses conducted to determine important variables in outcomes for children are summarized in Table 2.10.

All of the tables denote statistically significant results by "$p < .05$ or less." This indicates that the probability of obtaining the result by chance alone would be no more than five times in 100. If $p < .01$, the probability of obtaining the result by chance could occur one time in 100. The smaller the p value, the more confidence we can have that the result is not due to random chance. Actual significance levels attained are reported in each analysis.

Chapter 2



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Chapter 2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Introduction

An abundance of data has been collected throughout the life of the Transition Project, and results have been analyzed in a number of ways. This chapter presents results in three ways. First, a summary of findings from the annual reports is presented. These findings are catalogued in Table 2.1. Second, results are presented that look across the years of the study, providing the longitudinal analysis of data according to the original treatment group design. These findings are summarized in Table 2.2 and results from some instruments are displayed in other tables throughout the text. Finally, we present the additional analysis that were conducted to understand which factors are important in explaining results outside the treatment group design. The results from these analyses are presented in Table 2.10. Because of their sizes, these tables appear in Appendix C.

Annual Results According to Treatment Group

After each year of the Transition Project, evaluators have presented the Arizona grantee with a report on the year's outcomes based on the national study's quasi-experimental design. The format created for the first annual report remained basically unchanged throughout the study.

Most analyses of Transition Project data were conducted every year of the study. Some, however, were modified in order to optimize evaluation activities over time. In 1995, for example, case studies of the Transition schools were prepared in lieu of the standard format and analysis. Nevertheless, child outcome data were analyzed by treatment group that year.

Some analyses also were modified because they had never shown minimal significance in early years and, therefore, research priorities were shifted to make better use of the growing body of evaluation findings. In addition, certain instruments were not analyzed consistently throughout the study because of changes in the types of scores the national research coordinating team made available to the state sites. For example, during the first two years of the study the national research coordinating team analyzed the *Assessment Profile* classroom observation instrument by percentage of "yes" scores. Different parameters, however, were used in later years by request of the instrument's authors.

Annual reports revealed several differences between treatment groups that are considered statistically significant. Only a few of these differences, however, remained consistent over time. These can be found in Table 2.1, which summarizes the findings for Cohorts 1 and 2 described in the annual reports. Note that Table 2.1 includes only data up to Spring of 1996—a separate report for Spring 1997 would have focussed only on data for Cohort 2 and was not considered an efficient use of time.

The following sections present a summary of significant findings by outcome category from the annual reports.

CHILD OUTCOMES

Four significant differences were found between groups for the two math subtests of the *Woodcock Johnson* in 1993 and 1994. Three of the four differences favored the Transition group. In 1995 and 1996, differences on applied math problems appeared to favor the Comparison group, but those differences were nullified when children's primary language was taken into account. Primary language also erased significant differences on the *Woodcock Johnson* reading subscales in 1995 and 1996.

Few group differences were found on items related to social/emotional and attitudinal measures. No differences were found on parents' perceptions of children's social skills. Children's adjustment to school did not differ except on two items in 1993 when Transition group parents reported their children getting along with the teacher and overall adjustment higher than Comparison group parents.

Children's attitudes about school differed on only two items over the years. In 1994, Transition group children reported liking school more than Comparison group children, and in 1996, Transition group children rated their relationships with peers more positively than Attrition group children.

One promising finding that emerged in 1994 is that Transition teachers rated their students more positively than did Comparison teachers on the *Teacher Ratings of Students* instrument. When researchers then examined teacher ratings of students relative to both actual academic achievement and observer ratings of classroom DAP they turned up some interesting patterns.

High DAP teachers (DAP ratings of high, medium, or low based on *Assessment Profile* results) reported significantly higher perceptions of children's affective and academic growth than did medium or low DAP teachers. Furthermore, high DAP teachers had significantly higher perceptions of the importance of assertiveness in social situations and the frequency of children asserting themselves and exhibiting self-control than did medium or low DAP teachers.

Nevertheless, students' *Woodcock Johnson* test scores in high DAP classrooms were consistently lower than found in either medium or low DAP classrooms, and students in medium DAP settings made greater gains than those in high or low DAP classes.[11] This finding reflects only the 1994 data and was not duplicated in 1995.

Another Transition Project researcher associated with the local evaluation examined the relationship between parenting style (as measured by the *Parenting Dimensions Inventory*) and children's *Woodcock Johnson* academic achievement scores. Total scores on the *Parenting Dimensions Inventory* completed when children were in kindergarten predicted about five percent of the variance in third grade *Woodcock Johnson* broad reading and math scores. Of the four *Parenting Dimensions* scales, parental responsiveness was most highly correlated with academic achievement.[12]

FAMILY OUTCOMES

Few of the instruments used to track changes in family outcomes showed significant differences between Transition and Comparison groups in terms of use of social services, stability, self-sufficiency, parenting, and family involvement in children's education. In 1994, however, an analysis of the local family interview questions showed that Transition parents reported having significantly more opportunities at school to develop parenting skills and talk with teachers about their child. Furthermore, more Transition families were knowledgeable about local community resources.

In 1996, the instrument *Family Involvement in Children's Learning* indicated that Transition parents were invited to and attended more school-based activities and volunteer opportunities than parents at Comparison schools. That same year, a few small differences between groups were also found regarding family resources and public assistance program participation. This was the first year that such differences appeared.

SYSTEM-RELATED OUTCOMES

Perhaps the strongest results favoring Transition occurred on instruments that examined systemic change. The *School Survey of Early Childhood Programs* completed by teachers showed early on that Transition teachers rated their programs as higher in elements that constitute an early childhood orientation than did Comparison teachers. In 1994, however, fewer areas favored Transition, while one item favored Comparison.

The most consistent findings over time relate to classroom practice. The *Assessment Profile* classroom observation tool for DAP showed differences favoring Transition throughout the study on most elements of DAP. Table 3.4 in Chapter 3 clearly illustrates this pattern. (Due to changes in the way the instrument was analyzed after 1994, only data from 1995 to 1997 are compared across time.) Another classroom observation instrument, ADAPT, was introduced to the study in 1995, and also showed significantly higher DAP ratings for Transition classrooms each year on every domain (see Table 3.5).

Longitudinal Analysis of Results According to Treatment Group

While annual data reports were informative to Project personnel and indicated possible trends, these reports were always considered "snapshots" of the Transition Project and their results were viewed as preliminary. To develop stronger conclusions about the Project, a comprehensive longitudinal analysis was undertaken drawing upon data collected from both cohorts during the full length of the Project. Table 2.2 summarizes these longitudinal findings regarding outcomes for children, families, system, and policy.

The following section presents an analysis of longitudinal data for children and families. Findings related to systemic and policy change, however, will be presented in Chapter 3. There are a two primary reasons for this. First, the systemic change data cannot be analyzed longitudinally by treatment group because many of the respondents—teachers and family advocates—changed through the years as children moved up in grade; analyzing data from several respondents as if they were one would be inappropriate, but this data can be used to determine if a pattern emerges over time. Second, much of the data pertaining to systemic change was collected on locally-developed measures administered only to the Transition group, not to the Comparison group. Therefore, no direct contrasts can be made between groups. By relying on multiple data sources, however, inferences can be drawn.

Other data that appear as shaded items on Table 2.2 will also be held for discussion in Chapter 3. These include certain questions on children and families that actually assess systemic factors related to the Transition Project. They are a part of a data set that is not technically longitudinal.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILDREN

All of the evaluation questions regarding outcomes for children hypothesized that the services provided through the Transition Project would result in greater gains by children in the Transition treatment condition than by those in the Comparison condition. The data, however, provide evidence that this hypothesis is not accurate.

Relatively few differences exist between Transition and Comparison group children; those that occur are generally small and tend to favor the Comparison group as often as Transition.

On cognitive measures, longitudinal analysis reveals no differences between groups in reading performance by third grade. Final math scores show the Comparison group outperforming the Transition group in third grade, while the reverse was true at kindergarten. One cognitive measure does favor the Transition group: vocabulary measures show the Transition group ahead of the Comparison group by third grade after starting out behind in kindergarten. The differences in both cases are small but significant.

The locally developed *Teacher Ratings of Students* showed some differences throughout the years, but by the study's end in 1997, teachers rated Transition group children significantly higher in only one domain—logical/mathematical thinking.

On measures of social and emotional development, Transition group children also do not exceed Comparison children. Longitudinal analysis of the parent version of the *Social Skills Rating System*, as well as the companion measure, *Problem Behaviors* show no differences between groups. The teacher version of the problem behaviors instrument, however, shows that third grade Transition students exhibited more externalizing problems (i.e., those outward directed problem behaviors such as aggressive behavior) than Comparison students. In fact, the overall standard score for behavior problems was significantly higher for the Transition group than those in the Comparison group, indicating a greater number of problem behaviors overall.

Parent ratings of their child's health also showed no difference between Transition and Comparison groups. The only difference that was found among groups favored the Transition group over the Attrition group in frequency of dental visits.

On the instrument that measured children's attitude toward school *(What I Think of School)*, longitudinal analysis showed no differences between groups. Children across the study expressed uniformly high ratings. The scale, however, had a limited range (1 to 3), so group differences would be unlikely unless many students responded at the extremes.

In parent ratings of their child's adjustment to school, significant differences appear on three of eight items. But each of these three items show the Transition group better adjusted to school than the Attrition group, not the Comparison group. This is shown in Table 2.3. One trend is worth noting: on six out of eight items, Transition parent ratings of their child's adjustment tend to improve from kindergarten to third grade, while Comparison group parent ratings decrease on six out of eight items, and Attrition group parent ratings decrease on all eight. While these differences are not statistically significant, they reveal a trend that may attain significance in the future.

Table 2.3: Comparison of Treatment Groups Over Time on *Your Child's Adjustment to School*

ITEM	TREATMENT GROUP	SPRING KINDERGARTEN	SPRING THIRD GRADE	p <
How much do you think your child likes school?	TRANSITION	8.30	8.38	
	COMPARISON	8.57	8.19	---
	ATTRITION	8.93	8.01	
How much effort do you think your child puts into trying to do well in school?	TRANSITION	7.95	8.25	
	COMPARISON	8.26	8.02	---
	ATTRITION	8.69	7.78	
How well do you think your child actually does in school?	TRANSITION	7.48	8.03*	
	COMPARISON	7.96	7.83	.016
	ATTRITION	8.35	7.40*	
How well does your child get along with his/her teacher?	TRANSITION	8.54	8.48*	
	COMPARISON	8.36	8.44	.034
	ATTRITION	8.89	8.14*	
How well does your child get along with other children at school?	TRANSITION	7.55	7.97	
	COMPARISON	7.72	7.54	---
	ATTRITION	8.30	7.86	
How pleased are you with the school's academic program?	TRANSITION	7.84	7.91	
	COMPARISON	8.51	7.98	---
	ATTRITION	8.57	7.83	
How pleased are you w/ the school in terms of meeting your child's social & emotional needs?	TRANSITION	7.91	7.69	
	COMPARISON	8.04	7.41	---
	ATTRITION	8.28	7.50	
How would you rate your child's overall adjustment to school at this time?	TRANSITION	8.49	8.61*	
	COMPARISON	7.98	8.39	.035
	ATTRITION	8.74	8.23*	

Number of subjects: TRANSITION = 56, COMPARISON = 47, ATTRITION = 54
Ratings are based on a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is most positive
* indicates that groups are significantly different

QUESTIONS ABOUT FAMILIES

Questions about families were developed under the hypothesis that Transition would positively impact families in a number of ways—from helping families obtain basic assistance, to improving self-sufficiency, parenting skills, and communications relationships, and involvement with the schools. A number of instruments were analyzed longitudinally to address these questions.

Transition families were expected to receive more social service support through the school system and show more evidence of stability and self-sufficiency than Comparison families. The family background component of the Family Interview, however, revealed no consistent differences between the groups over the course of the study regarding enrollment in social services.

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The *Final Interview for Families* asked whether families had experienced any of 31particular needs at any time during the Transition Project—also whether that need was met, and how. Table 2.4 shows the results. For the most part, Transition and Comparison groups had comparable needs for services throughout the project. Only four items showed significant differences. The Comparison group had greater need on two items related to children (after school care, and treatment for specific dental problems), while the Transition group had greater need on two items related to parents (substance abuse, counseling or drug treatment, and help with getting clothes, shoes, etc.).

Only two significant differences appeared between groups when examining whether their needs were met. Both items favored the Transition group (help with getting clothes and shoes, etc., and transportation).

The last component of the *Final Interview for Families* examined how families received needed services: whether they sought services on their own, were referred by someone from the school or the Transition Project, or whether they were referred by someone else. Results indicate that Transition families did receive services through the school significantly more often than the Comparison group (on 30 percent of the services), and many of the services were those targeted by family advocates. But such results must be interpreted with caution because only a small number of families expressed needs on any particular item.

Table 2.4: Service Needs and Delivery by Treatment Group – *Final Interview for Families*

Since your child entered kindergarten, has s/he needed:	Percentage responding "yes"	If yes, did you receive these services?	If yes, received service through school/Transition
After School Care	T = 23.4% (n=15) C = 46.4% (n=26) p < .008	T = 85.7% (n=12) C = 69.2% (n=18)	T = 50.0% (n=6) C = 11.1% (n=2) p < .05
Dental Care	T = 90.6% (n=58) C = 82.1% (n=46)	T = 96.6% (n=56) C = 95.7% (n=44)	T = 46.4% (n=26) C = 18.2% (n=8) p < .02
Treatment for specific dental problems	T = 17.2% (n=64) C = 37.5% (n=21) p < .02	T = 90.9% (n=10) C = 81.0% (n=17)	T = 40.0% (n=4) C = 11.8% (n=2)
Counseling for emotional, behavioral, or adjustment problems	T = 15.6% (n=10) C = 14.3% (n=8)	T = 80.0% (n=8) C = 87.5% (n=7)	T = 62.5% (n=5) C = 0 p < .04
Free/Reduced Price Breakfast or Lunch Program	T = 89.1% (n=57) C = 94.6% (n=53)	T = 98.2% (n=53) C = 98.1% (n=52)	T = 73.6% (n=39) C = 92.3% (n=48) p < .03
Since your child entered kindergarten, have you or other adults in your home needed:	**Percentage responding "yes"**	**If yes, did you receive these services?**	**If yes, received service through school/Transition**
Unemployment Income	T = 12.7% (n=8) C = 8.9% (n=5)	T = 87.5% (n=7) C = 60.0% (n=3)	T = 100% (n=7) C = 10.0% (n=3) p < .02
College Training (2 or 4 year college/ university)	T = 20.3% (n=13) C = 25.5% (n=14)	T = 76.9% (n=10) C = 64.3% (n=9)	T = 20.0% (n=2) C = 0 p < .02
Parenting Classes	T = 21.9% (n=14) C = 19.6% (n=11)	T = 71.4% (n=10) C = 80.0% (n=8)	T = 100% (n=11) C = 50.0% (n=4) p < .04
Health Care	T = 62.5% (n=46) C = 64.3% (n=36)	T = 97.5% (n=39) C = 100% (n=36)	T = 15.4% (n=6) C = 2.8% (n=1) p < .05
Nutritional Services	T = 23.4% (n=15) C = 20.8% (n=11)	T = 80.0% (n=12) C = 100% (n=11)	T = 58.3% (n=7) C = 9.1% (n=1) p < .05
Substance abuse, counseling or treatment (drugs, alcohol, other substances)	T = 10.9% (n=7) C = 0 p < .02	T = 42.8% (n=3) C = 0	T = 66.7% (n=2) C = 0
Help with getting clothing, shoes, etc.	T = 28.1% (n=18) C = 7.1% (n=4) p < .003	T = 88.9% (n=16) C = 25.0% (n=1) p < .006	T = 93.8% (n=15) C = 0 p < .005
Transportation	T = 29.7% (n=19) C = 21.4% (n=12)	T = 94.4% (n=17) C = 66.7% (n=8) p < .05	T = 17.7% (n=3) C = 0

Number of subjects: T=64; C=54 Table represents services in which significant differences between groups were found in at least one of the three columns. Survey included 11 possible child-related needs and 20 potential adult-related needs. Shaded cells represent findings that did **not** reach significance.

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Family self-sufficiency was addressed by questions regarding family use of public assistance and other items from the family background portion of the Family Interview. In all cases, families reported less use of public services by the spring of their children's third grade year, but no differences appeared between treatment groups. Families also reported higher incomes and greater employment, but again no difference appeared between treatment groups. Analysis of family risk factors similarly revealed no differences between groups.

The *Family Resource Scale* also provided information about financial stability and self-sufficiency. Table 2.5 shows average ratings of Transition, Comparison, and Attrition group families on the adequacy of several areas of need. Parents' ratings of adequacy for the most basic needs, during their children's kindergarten year, are compared with their ratings at third grade. Comparison group parents rated resources as more adequate on two out of nine items during their children's kindergarten year. By grade three, one item favored Transition and one favored Comparison. Most striking is the fact that Transition and/or Comparison group parents rated resources as more adequate than Attrition group parents on seven of nine areas. Longitudinal analysis showed that the Transition group made more progress on adequacy of resources over time on one area and the Comparison group made more progress on another area.

Table 2.5: Comparison of Treatment Groups Over Time on *Family Resource Scale* - Average Scores for Basic Resources

RESOURCE	TREATMENT GROUP	SPRING KINDERGARTEN	SPRING THIRD GRADE	p <
Food for two meals per day	TRANSITION	4.3	4.8	[1] T vs. C: .02
	COMPARISON	4.8[1]	4.8	
	ATTRITION	4.3	4.5	
Housing	TRANSITION	4.5	4.8[1]	[1] T/C vs. A: .005
	COMPARISON	4.7	4.8[1]	
	ATTRITION	4.3	4.5	
Money to buy necessities	TRANSITION	3.3	4.2	[1] T/C vs. A: .002
	COMPARISON	3.6	4.3[1]	
	ATTRITION	3.4	3.7	
Clothes	TRANSITION	3.7	4.2	[1] C vs. A: .0001
	COMPARISON	3.9	4.4[1]	
	ATTRITION	3.5	3.6	
Heat for the home	TRANSITION	3.7	4.4[4]	[1] T vs. C: .02 [2] T vs. C: .05 [3] T vs. A: .0003 [4] Repeated Measure: .02
	COMPARISON	4.4[1]	4.8[2,3]	
	ATTRITION	4.1	3.9	
Plumbing/water in the home	TRANSITION	4.4	4.7	[1] C vs. A: .01
	COMPARISON	4.6	4.9[1]	
	ATTRITION	4.4	4.4	
Money to pay monthly bills	TRANSITION	3.6	4.3[3]	[1] T vs. C: .05 [2] T vs. A: .0001 [3] Repeated Measure: .003
	COMPARISON	3.8	4.7	
	ATTRITION	3.8	3.7[1,2,3]	
Medical care for the family	TRANSITION	3.8	4.1	---
	COMPARISON	4.1	4.2	
	ATTRITION	4.1	4.0	
Transportation	TRANSITION	3.7	4.2[1]	[1] T/C vs. A: .03
	COMPARISON	3.3	4.3[1]	
	ATTRITION	3.4	3.7	

Scale: Adequacy: 1=Never, 2=Seldom, 3=Sometimes, 4=Usually, 5=Always. Number of Subjects: T=53, C=45, A=50

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Certain Transition services such as parenting workshops and assistance from the family advocates were intended to improve parenting skills and bolster parent involvement in their child's education. Therefore, it was hypothesized, Transition parents would be rated higher on those behaviors than Comparison families. The *Parenting Dimensions Inventory*, however, showed no differences in parenting skills between groups. In addition, the Family *Involvement in Children's Learning* instrument showed no differences between groups in the types or frequency of communication and relationships with school staff, but Transition parents reported that their schools offered significantly more activities to parents than did Comparison or Attrition parents. Differences were also found favoring Transition over the Attrition group on the number of events parents participated in, and volunteer opportunities offered and participated in. (See Table 2.6).

Table 2.6: Average Scores on *Family Involvement in Children's Learning* by Treatment Group - at Third grade

Items w/significant differences between groups	Transition	Comparison	Attrition	p <
How many (out of 12) activities or events have been offered to you at your child's school?	9.39 [1,2]	7.54 [1]	5.64 [2]	[1] .001 [2] .0001
How many of the activities or events offered did you attend?	6.41 [2]	5.35	3.36 [2]	[2] .0001
How many (out of 11) volunteer opportunities were available to you?	6.73 [2]	5.79	3.98 [2]	[2] .0001
How many of the opportunities did you participate in?	4.05 [2]	3.69	2.23 [2]	[2] .0001

Number of subjects **T=64; C=54; A=80**

Transition families were also expected to have higher participation in literacy and English as a Second Language programs because of support made available to them. The data, however, do not provide strong support for this hypothesis. Both groups showed similar participation in these activities: 15 Transition parents versus 20 Comparison families participated in GED training. Although these numbers are not significantly different, about 36 percent of those who did not have GEDs or high school diplomas at the beginning of this study took GED classes during the study. Neither did the Transition and Comparison group differ significantly in terms of participation in ESL classes. Overall, 18 Transition parents versus 11 Comparison parents took ESL classes. Taken together, this level of participation in ESL programs represents 45% of the families who identified themselves at the beginning of the study as speaking primarily Spanish in their home.

Possible Explanations for Results

Given the lack of strong findings each year of the Transition Project, it is not surprising to find few strong longitudinal differences by treatment group. Indeed, similar results have occurred at a majority of the other 30 state sites participating in the national Transition Project evaluation. Nevertheless, it is difficult to imagine why the Arizona Project—which overall, was highly implemented, staffed, and funded—did not generate more effects for children and families. A few cogent factors must be discussed that might explain the lack of strong effects.

CONTAMINATION OF TREATMENT

The first, and perhaps most influential factor, is the designation of a comparison group in a natural school setting. Simply defining a comparison group does not prevent its members from receiving some degree of treatment—and in this case, the potential for contamination was high. While the Transition treatment was intended to be limited to the children and families enrolled in Transition schools, each Comparison school also had a Head Start classroom on site. Throughout the study, from 15 to 34 percent of the Comparison group families had younger children attending Head Start classrooms. Consequently, each of these Comparison families received the assistance of a family advocate and other services provided by the same Head Start agency responsible for the Transition sites.

In addition, Comparison schools and Transition schools do not operate in a vacuum: each school was simultaneously operating its own programs, state and federal grants, and district programs, many with goals that overlapped those of the Transition Project—such as improved parent involvement, higher student achievement, and increased access to comprehensive services for families. Appendix B presents a table of Transition-like practices and programs that were reported to be in place at Comparison schools in 1996. From this table, it is easy to imagine how the Comparison group could be contaminated.

ATTRITION

Unexpectedly high attrition rates also affected the study. (Attrition is defined as students and families moving out of their original treatment group.) Attrition rates not only proved to be considerably higher than anticipated at the national level, but they were also higher than average at the Arizona site. Table 2.7 below shows the large declines in total Transition and Comparison group children at each cycle of data collection.

High attrition poses a serious threat to the validity of a longitudinal study because it removes participants from treatment groups. Each year efforts were made by the evaluators to understand the makeup and dynamics of the Attrition group (by including in a number of analyses those in the Attrition group who could be located, tested, and interviewed). Further investigation has been undertaken for this report. Attrition data are analyzed and described under the section titled, "Attrition revisited." However, even after these efforts, it is still not possible to calculate how much the results would differ had these families stayed in their original treatment groups.

Table 2.7: Numbers of Transition and Comparison Group Children in Study by Data Collection Cycle

	FALL 1	SPRING 1	SPRING 2	SPRING 3	SPRING 4	% ATTRITION
Cohort 1	119	108	77	57	51	57%
Cohort 2	128	115	95	74	68	47%

LANGUAGE

Variations in primary language also may have skewed results. At the beginning of the study, almost one-third of children and families in the study spoke Spanish as their primary language. To accommodate these children, they were tested during the fall of their kindergarten year using the Spanish version of the *PPVT*, but a Spanish version of the *Woodcock Johnson* was never made available to the study. Therefore, Spanish-speaking students were not able to take this test until their teachers felt they were ready, and accuracy of teacher's judgements of children's readiness was likely to vary. Even after language minority children were taking the tests in English, language proficiency varied widely. While this factor was taken into account for analyses of student achievement, the degree of proficiency and its effects on test scores cannot be easily measured.

PROBLEMS WITH MEASUREMENT

A few of the instruments included in the national core data set may not have been appropriate for this study for a variety of reasons. The selection of a standardized achievement test was needed at the national level so that student scores could be combined and compared with other sites across the country. However, there is a potential problem in matching standardized tests to the program treatment. Proponents of DAP contend that such tests do not measure the types of skills emphasized in DAP classrooms, nor do they assess the motivation, self-confidence, creativity, and reasoning processes that the holistic method is designed to enhance. Philosophically, norm-referenced testing is considered inappropriate for assessing DAP classrooms because DAP emphasizes individualized, child-centered education

Some instruments had properties that made them problematic for other reasons. For example, the measure of children's attitude toward school, *What I think of School*, had a very limited range of responses (from one to three). This fact makes it unlikely to find large differences between groups because there is so little variation in scores. It was difficult for the national research coordinating team to locate appropriate instruments at the beginning of the study, so much so that some instruments were used differently than they had been intended. These instruments were developed for and validated on a different population than one similar to that of the Transition Project. For example, the *Assessment Profile* was originally developed for preschool classroom observations. The authors reworked the instrument to reflect primary grade classrooms, but a research version was used in the study.

LIMITED DATA MEASURING FAMILY NEED AND PROVISION OF SERVICES

Lack of data on the precise nature and extent of social services delivered to each family limited the ability of evaluators to identify program impacts in this regard. While it is clear that some families had greater needs than others, and that family advocates worked more intensely with certain families than others, no data detail how needs differed and how resources were allocated. It is unrealistic to assume that all families—whether in need of assistance or not, whether willing to participate in the program or not—had an equal probability of improvement, but data analyses were unable to separate out those who needed and received services from those who did not.

STATISTICAL POWER

Although the data from both cohorts were combined in order to increase statistical power, some analyses include data from only a small number of participants which makes the findings less reliable. Longitudinal analyses were mostly limited to children and families who had participated for the duration of the Project. Because attrition was so high, these numbers were often on the low end of our ability to make valid comparisons.

All of the above factors, operating alone or in combination, have the potential to obliterate consistent differences between treatment groups. But it is not possible to determine what effect, if any, they had.

Other Longitudinal Analyses Conducted

Because a number of confounding factors were identified as potential problems on the national core data set, local evaluators conducted additional analyses to determine whether previously untested factors might predict or explain some outcomes better than treatment group alone. This approach was also taken by other Transition Project site evaluations across the country.

ATTRITION REVISITED

Evaluators and program managers suspected that the extent of measurable impact might be related to length of time that students and families were exposed to the Transition intervention. Therefore, they turned their attention to the Attrition group once again. Until final data were in, it had not been possible to assess the Attrition group's full effects—some earlier results even showed the Attrition group performing better than Transition group, which is inconsistent with research on student mobility.

Multiple analyses were conducted to more fully understand the dynamics of the Attrition group. In longitudinal analysis, however, the Attrition group showed no differences from other groups either in repeated measures analysis or in differences between kindergarten scores and third grade scores.

Evaluators then examined the distribution of *Woodcock Johnson* scores for the Attrition group and compared it to the distribution of Transition and Comparison group scores. It was suspected that there might be two types of students and families in the Attrition group: those who had attained greater financial stability and had relocated in more affluent areas, and those whose life circumstances were deteriorating. If this were true, the hypothesis was that some kind of bimodal distribution would appear in scores. This, however, was not the case. In fact, the Attrition group looked much like both the Transition and Comparison groups.

To eliminate the possibility that the Attrition group's outcomes interacted with the original treatment group, evaluators analyzed the third grade *Woodcock Johnson* scores according to their original treatment groups. But no significant differences appeared between Attrition group members who started out in Transition versus those who started out in Comparison.

Finally, evaluators looked at the length of time that Attrition group members were exposed to their original treatment condition in an attempt to uncover any differences due to time in treatment. In order to isolate the effects of time in treatment, the number of months each child and family spent in the Transition treatment condition were calculated. Those who spent the entire Project in the Comparison condition were given a time-in-treatment score of zero months. The rest of the participants were ranked two ways: some analyses used actual number of months in treatment, others used categories that were developed as follows:

Time in Treatment Categories

No treatment	=	0 months in the Transition treatment (Comparison group)
Minimal treatment	=	1 to 9 months in Transition treatment
Partial treatment	=	10 months to 22 months in Transition treatment
Maximum treatment	=	23 to 36 months in Transition treatment

These analyses, however, also revealed no differences, as did the other analysis examining number of months in the Attrition group. In sum, the time-in-treatment variable did not predict any child or family outcomes.

RISK FACTORS

Research has shown that a variety of characteristics increase the probability of problems in school and life. One variable that had not been examined systematically prior to the longitudinal analysis, was the degree to which a child and family was "at-risk" of negative outcomes. Drawing on the work of the national research coordinating team and other site evaluators, the local evaluation team put together an 11-item risk index that would provide some indication of the factors working against successful child and family outcomes. The risks were identified as follows:

Risk Factors

- Parent has less than a high school diploma or GED (at first Family Interview)
- Parent was less than 20 years old when child was born
- Parent indicates chronic depression in 1994 or 1996 Family Interview
- Family income was below the federal poverty level at first Family Interview
- Family receives AFDC
- Family receives SSI
- Family has four or more children at home
- Parent is the only adult in the home
- Time and money subscales of the *Family Resource Scale* at final Family Interview are reported as inadequate
- More than one move from child's kindergarten year through third grade
- English not primary language at home at first Family Interview

Averages were examined for each group, as well as for Attrition group members within their original treatment groups. Results are shown in Table 2.8 below.

Table 2.8: Average Number of Risks According to Treatment Group at Beginning and End of the Project.

TREATMENT GROUP	AT BEGINNING[1]	AT END[2]
Transition	5.53	5.52
Comparison	5.56	5.26
Attrition		5.74

[1] Number of subjects: T=118; C=88
[2] Number of subjects: T=66; C=54; A=86

No differences were significant. A separate analysis looking at the average number of risks by number of months in the Attrition group also revealed no significant differences.

THE LANGUAGE FACTOR

At the beginning of the Transition Project, approximately one-third of the children in the study spoke English as a second language at home. Of those, about 90 percent spoke Spanish as their first language. The fact that English was a second language for these children posed some concerns for the evaluation. First and foremost, a child's English proficiency affects scores on any tests administered in English. Specifically, such scores may reflect knowledge of English more than knowledge of subject matter. It is also widely acknowledged that most standardized tests contain an element of cultural bias.[13]

At the beginning of this study, teachers made a judgement as to which children would need to be tested in Spanish. Those children were tested in kindergarten with the Spanish *TVIP* and the English equivalent, the *PPVT*. The Spanish version of *Woodcock Johnson* was never included in the national core data set due to the development of the test's norms which were based upon a Spanish-speaking population outside of the United States. Therefore, the *Woodcock Johnson* was not administered until the teacher felt the child had enough English proficiency to be tested on content knowledge and not English-language comprehension. At that time, the child took the English *PPVT* and *Woodcock Johnson*.

For most of the Spanish-dominant children, testing in Spanish was discontinued after one year upon recommendation of each child's teacher. Even so, English proficiency varied greatly among students, with large gaps existing between conversational or reading English and proficiency at testing well in English. Test results were expected to vary greatly depending on primary language.

To determine the part that language played in the achievement of students, the evaluators examined *Woodcock Johnson* and *PPVT/TVIP* scores both by the language the child was tested in during fall of kindergarten and by language used most frequently at home (these two were highly correlated), and then using language as a covariate. Surprisingly, language did not have as much of an impact on scores as one would expect from the literature. In fact, as Table 2.9 shows below, there was only one difference that proved to be significant. Non-English dominant speakers made greater gains from kindergarten to third grade in math scores.

Table 2.9: Comparison of Kindergarten and Third Grade Reading and Math Scores for English Dominant and Non-English Dominant Speakers

	English Dominant Speakers	Non-English Dominant Speakers	p <
Kindergarten Spring Math RW Score	423.1	415.1	---
Grade 3 Spring Math RW Score	480.1	481.4	---
Difference K to Grade 3 – Math Scores	57.5	65.8	.02
Kindergarten Spring Reading RW Score	394.4	392.3	---
Grade 3 Spring Reading RW Score	474.2	467.5	---
Difference K to Grade 3 – Reading Scores	80.4	80.6	---

Number of subjects for Kindergarten Woodcock Johnson (WJ) & difference scores: English Dominant: 132; Non-English: 22 Number of subjects for grade 3 WJ: English Dominant: 116; Non-English Dominant: 59
Note: Number of non-English dominant subjects is higher at end because no Spanish version of the WJ was available, so the majority were not tested with WJ in Spring of Kindergarten at all.
RW–Rasch Wright

The *PPVT* difference scores showed a pattern similar to the math difference scores. English-dominant speakers improved by 15.8 points from kindergarten to third grade, where non-English dominant speakers improved by 23.4 points ($p < .0001$).

English proficiency also holds implications for family economic well-being. Job opportunities are limited for the non-English speaking population, and poverty is highly correlated with language minority status. Because of the possibility that primary language could be an important factor explaining family social and economic circumstances, each of the demographic variables gathered during the family background portion of the first and last Family Interview was analyzed according to the primary language spoken by the family. None of the family variables, however, were dramatically different for the 32 percent of families who indicated they spoke a language other than English most often at home. Overall, the percentages indicated that the non-English speakers were slightly worse off economically at the beginning of the study than the English-speaking families but not dramatically so.

The average number of risks per family did not differ by language either. English dominant families had an average of 5.9 risks, while non-English dominant families had an average of 5.8 risks.

Alternative Analyses on Child Outcomes

Two other methods were used to analyze children's outcomes in hopes of revealing differences not already found by treatment group. Table 2.10 shows the range of these analyses. First the cognitive measures were reanalyzed with multiple regressions. Ten variables were included in the analysis to determine whether any could highlight or explain differences in outcomes between children. The variables are listed below:

Variables Examined

- Treatment group
- Time in treatment
- First language child was tested in kindergarten
- Family involvement score
- Inadequate Family Resources on nine most basic resources
- Kindergarten *Woodcock Johnson* math Rasch Wright score
- Kindergarten *Woodcock Johnson* reading Rasch Wright score
- Family income at entry to project
- School
- Risk index score

The only factors that predicted differences in cognitive outcomes were kindergarten reading and math scores. Kindergarten reading scores predicted 20 percent of the variance on third grade *Woodcock Johnson* math scores, while kindergarten math scores predicted six percent of the variance. Kindergarten *Woodcock Johnson* reading scores also predicted 33 percent of the variance on third grade reading scores, while kindergarten *Woodcock Johnson* math scores accounted for 25 percent of the variance on third grade *PPVT* scores.

Data from the *Social Skills Rating System* were analyzed similarly. For parent perceptions of their child's social skills, number of risks for a family was found to be the most consistent predictor, though it only predicted a small portion of effects—8 percent of variance on the responsibility subscale and 7 percent on parent ratings of how cooperative they were. First language predicted 9 percent on the cooperation subscale. Number of risks also predicted 7 percent of outcomes for parent rating of behavior problems.

Another method used to search for differences in child outcomes was to compare the highest and lowest performing twenty percent of third grade students on the *Woodcock Johnson* math and reading scores with the 10 variables. The hypothesis was that combining Transition and Comparison groups and examining only the very highest and lowest performers, key variables might be identified that could be likely factors in determining success or failure.

Interesting results emerged from this analysis (see Table 2.11). Top third grade performers on *Woodcock Johnson* math tests had significantly higher spring kindergarten math and reading *Woodcock Johnson* scores than did bottom third grade performers. Top third grade performers on *Woodcock Johnson* reading tests also had significantly higher scores for kindergarten reading, kindergarten math, and family involvement.

Table 2.11: Variables that Differ for Highest and Lowest Performers at Third Grade

Third Grade Math:	Highest 20%	Lowest 20%	p <
Kindergarten Spring Math RW Score	425.8	411.5	.0001
Kindergarten Spring Reading RW Score	399.3	386.5	.002
Third Grade Reading:	**Highest 20%**	**Lowest 20%**	**p <**
Family Involvement	11.7	9.2	.03
Kindergarten Math RW Score	426.7	412.6	.002
Kindergarten Reading RW Score	401.3	383.1	.0001

The highest and lowest 20% of scores in third grade represent a total of 48 students. RW=Rasch Wright

This analysis was repeated using data from only the Transition group children, and while the number of subjects is too small to consider valid (top and bottom had 14 subjects each), the only difference that emerged was that the highest and lowest performers on third grade *Woodcock Johnson* math scores had significantly different family involvement scores and kindergarten *Woodcock Johnson* reading score did not differ.

No variables were found to produce significant differences between highest and lowest performers on the *Social Skills Rating System*. The only variable to approach significance was the number of risks: the top 20 percent had 4.1 risks versus the bottom which had 5.2 risks ($p < .054$).

Chapter 3

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Chapter 3 SUMMARY OF RESULTS REGARDING SYSTEM AND POLICY CHANGES

Introduction

Many sources of data provide information about the Transition Project. Chapter 2 presented the findings of the national core data set, which uncovered no strong evidence of differences accruing to the Transition group. While these findings may have been influenced by any or all of the confounding factors described in Chapter 2, the national core data set undoubtedly tells part of the Transition story.

The local evaluation that has been carried on throughout the course of the Project tells another part of the story. Much of the local effort focused on systemic change using a variety of instruments and methods to understand the broad range of perspectives from parents, teachers, family advocates, principals, and other stakeholders. This chapter presents findings of the local evaluation regarding systemic change and specific Transition components. To provide another angle on the data, this chapter also includes a number of personal accounts of the Project's impact.

Systemic Change

From the beginning of the Transition Project, it was anticipated that program services and activities would produce systemic changes both in the participating school systems and in the Head Start programs that feed them. Some of the expected changes would include improved methods for smoothing a child's transition from Head Start to public schools, changes in school policies to support Transition-like educational and social services, implementation of DAP in classrooms, and better collaboration between staff of Head Start and the public schools. These changes were expected to become "institutionalized" and continue well beyond the end of the Project.

To gauge the extent of systemic changes that occurred during the course of the Transition Project, evaluators gathered data from several sources. These included observations of activities in classrooms, program meetings, and other functions; surveys of participants; focus group discussions with participants; and site visit reports organized by the national Transition research coordinating team. From these data, several evaluation questions can be addressed regarding systemic change.

TRANSITION SERVICES

Transition Project developers believed that Head Start staff, family advocates, Transition school staff, and social service providers would collaborate to provide more coordinated services to participants. This hypothesis was assessed in several ways as presented below.

A set of locally developed discussion items called the Local Family Interview Questions were developed to supplement the national core data set's Family Interview. The Local Questions were designed to gather information about essential services provided by the family advocates, such as home visits, goal setting, and referrals for health and social services. Table 3.1 summarizes parents' responses to the Local Questions.

Table 3.1: Average Responses to Local Family Interview Questions

Questions	1993	1994	1996	1997
About how many times did your family advocate visit with you in your home?	(C1 only) 2.7	C1: 3.2	C1: 1.5	(C2 only) 1.7
		C2: 2.4	C2: 2.1	
Did you talk with your family advocate about needs your family may have?	66% yes	C1: 77% yes	C1: 54% yes	51% yes
		C2: 71% yes	C2: 62% yes	
Did you talk with your family advocate about setting goals for the year?	31% yes	C1: 47% yes	C1: 58% yes	38% yes
		C2: 38% yes	C2: 52% yes	
Were you able to accomplish these goals?	Not reported	C1: 81% yes	C1: 79% yes	19% yes
		C2: 71% yes	C2: 67% yes	
About how many times in the past year did your family advocate refer you to agencies for needed health or social services?	2.0	C1: 3.3	C1: 1.7	1.3
		C2: 2.0	C2: 2.2	

C1 = Cohort 1; C2 = Cohort 2

During the first year, participating families reported an average of almost three home visits, but for other years the average remained closer to two visits per family. Home visits by family advocates were considered central to the Transition Project. Discussing family needs with parents and attempting to set family goals were required activities of family advocates that usually occurred during the home visits. Throughout the study, a majority of parents recalled talking with the advocate about their needs, but the percentage of families who remembered setting goals was lower, ranging from 31 percent during the first year to a high of 58 percent in 1996. Of those parents who remembered setting goals, a clear majority (67 to 81 percent) described successfully completing their goals in 1994 and 1996, but only 19 percent said they were successful in 1997.

Family advocates were also expected to provide families with referrals to organizations and agencies for health or social service needs that families described. While the number of referrals varied widely for individual families, the average reported by all parents throughout the study ranged only between one and three.

Transition services were also assessed by self-evaluation of family advocates and teachers at Transition schools. Each spring 1993-1997, advocates and Transition teachers completed checklists rating how they perceived the operation of transition services. Two different versions of the *Innovation Component Checklist* were used. Family advocates rated transition services on a seven-item checklist, The *Family Advocate's Role in Providing Transition Services;* Transition teachers used an eight-item checklist, The *Teacher's Role in Providing Transition Services.* It is important to note that only some of the components on each checklist were similar in nature, and that ratings were not made by the same teachers and family advocates each year—staff turnover and the grade level progression of Transition students brought new staff into the Transition Project frequently. Furthermore, checklists were not used to assess Comparison school staff. Consequently, the results of the two checklists cannot be compared closely with each other, nor can they be analyzed longitudinally. Nevertheless, they offer some insights and illustrate possible trends.

Table 3.2: Family Advocates' Average Ratings of Their Role in Transition Services – *Innovation Component Checklist*

MEANS FOR 1993 – 97								
YEAR	COMP 1	COMP 2	COMP 3	COMP 4	COMP 5	COMP 6	COMP 7	OVERALL
1993	4.7	4.0	4.0	4.2	3.5	3.5	4.5	4.1
1994	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.4	4.1	4.5	4.4	4.3
1995	4.1	3.7	3.5	4.5	3.8	4.0	4.4	4.0
1996	3.7	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.2
1997	3.2	3.3	3.4	4.2	4.2	3.9	4.0	3.7
MEANS	**4.0**	**3.8**	**3.8**	**4.3**	**4.0**	**4.1**	**4.4**	**4.1**

Component 1: Communication/collaboration between family advocates and teachers
Component 2: Smooth transition of HS children from grade to grade: K-3
Component 3: Parent involvement
Component 4: Family services
Component 5: Child health
Component 6: Collaboration with special program and social service staff
Component 7: Documentation

As shown in Table 3.2 and Table 3.3, overall ratings by each group stayed relatively high throughout the Project, though family advocate ratings (mean = 4.1) were slightly higher than teacher ratings (mean = 3.8). On those checklist items that were similar for both groups (i.e., communication between family advocates and teachers, parent involvement, and child health) the ratings tended to agree fairly closely. Both groups also "agreed" in that they gave lower ratings toward the end of the Project than they did other years—overall family advocate ratings dropped .5 of a point on the last year, while overall teacher ratings dropped .6 points over the last two years.

Table 3.3: Teachers' Average Ratings of Their Role in Transition Services - *Innovation Component Checklist*

MEANS FOR 1993 – 97									
YEAR	COMP 1	COMP 2	COMP 3	COMP 4	COMP 5	COMP 6	COMP 7	COMP 8	OVERALL
1993	3.2	4.6	3.8	3.2	3.8	4.6	4.3	4.7	4.0
1994	3.4	4.1	3.3	2.9	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.5	3.9
1995	3.6	4.5	3.7	3.5	4.1	4.3	4.3	3.8	4.0
1996	3.5	3.8	3.1	2.9	3.9	3.6	3.8	4.0	3.6
1997	3.7	3.3	2.9	3.0	4.1	3.5	3.4	3.6	3.4
MEANS	**3.5**	**4.1**	**3.4**	**3.1**	**4.0**	**4.1**	**4.0**	**4.1**	**3.8**

Component 1: Communication/collaboration between teachers from grade to grade
Component 2: Communication/collaboration between family advocates and teachers
Component 3: Transition activities for students and families
Component 4: Child educational services
Component 5: Transfer of records
Component 6: Parent services and involvement
Component 7: Child Health
Component 8: Social services

The steepest decline in final year ratings by both teachers and family advocates (.8 of a point below the overall mean for each group) occurred for an item that assessed collaboration between the two groups. That decline was supported by comments from family advocates and teachers indicating that they had experienced breakdowns in communication because of reduced staffing and changes in assignments that had increased workloads. Teachers also gave substantially lower final year ratings to other Transition services that involved family advocates: parent services and involvement, child health, and social services. Family advocates agreed with teachers in giving lower ratings to parent involvement the final year, but they did not give lower ratings to other family or social services.

On the positive side during the last year of the Project, teachers gave higher than mean ratings to the communication and collaboration between teachers of different grade levels, and also to the transfer of records between grades—both considered important aspects of a smooth transition for students. Family advocates, on the other hand, gave lower final year ratings for the smooth transition of children from grade to grade.

Focus group interviews with Transition teachers also addressed transition services. A number of teachers commented that Transition had boosted parent involvement overall during the Project, particularly by helping teachers communicate with Spanish-speaking parents. Some felt that an important contributor to increased parent involvement was the teacher home visit made possible by the presence of family advocates. Some teachers also noted that the Project had stimulated more communication between teachers of successive grade levels: others, however, felt that transition activities between grades were inconsistent at best.

Comments and observations about transition services were also made in annual site visit reports by the national Transition research coordinating team from 1993 to 1996. The reports noted a number of transition services that were evident in Transition schools, such as home visits and other family contacts by family advocates and teachers, communication between Head Start and kindergarten teachers, and inclusion of regular Head Start children in elementary school activities. Among the primary challenges that national evaluators noted was the high turnover among family advocates during the course of the Project. This turnover, the report said, would make it more difficult for the program to provide consistent, nurturing service to families.

Transition services were also addressed by a committee composed of local Transition Project participants representing various roles (i.e., principal, family advocate, teacher, health manager, and parents). This committee completed the 1996 Program Implementation Profile (PIP), which was organized by the national Transition research coordinating team to document program implementation. PIP evaluators reported that several transition services were operating in the schools, specifically mentioning that transition plans existed for each child and family, systems were in place to transfer records from Head Start to kindergarten and beyond, and that teachers used transferred records to plan curriculum and instruction.

DAP IN THE CLASSROOM

Project developers anticipated that Transition school teachers would provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum and receive staff development related to this teaching approach. The implementation of developmentally appropriate practices in Transition and Comparison classrooms was assessed primarily by direct observations of trained observers. Each spring two different instruments were used.

First, the observers administered the *Assessment Profile of Early Childhood Programs* to rank classroom practice along six subscales. Results for the years 1995-1997 (see Table 3.4) show Transition classrooms ranking higher than Comparison classrooms on almost all subscales. On two of the subscales (Learning Environment and Curriculum) the differences were significant ($p < .01$) across all three years. Transition classrooms also ranked significantly higher than Comparison classrooms on the Scheduling and Interacting subscales during the final year of the Project.

The second assessment of DAP by direct observation was made each spring 1995-1997 using the instrument, A *Developmentally Appropriate Practice Template (ADAPT).* This instrument is intended to provide a more holistic picture of classroom DAP by examining practices in three broad domains. Results for ADAPT (see Table 3.5) show that Transition classrooms earned consistently higher scores in all three domains every year 1995-1997, and also received higher overall scores. All differences on ADAPT were considered significant ($p < .01$).

Table 3.4: Average Ratings of Classroom Observations with the *Assessment Profile* 1995-1997

	1995			1996			1997		
TYPE OF ASSISTANCE RECEIVED	T	C	p <	T	C	p <	T	C	p <
Availability of Learning Materials (9 items)	6.6	4.8	.0080	5.7	4.3	.0297	5.8	4.0	---
Learning Environment (19 items)	13.3	7.3	.0001	11.6	6.9	.0056	11.5	5.2	.0002
Scheduling (15 items)	14.0	13.4	---	12.4	11.2	.0281	15.0	12.0	.0001
Curriculum (28 items)	24.0	14.4	.0001	20.7	15.2	.0094	23.0	16.0	.0001
Interacting (23 items)	21.0	15.2	.0001	17.0	14.4	---	20.0	16.6	.0430
Individualizing (18 items)	14.4	12.7	.0201	13.0	13.2	---	14.0	14.2	---

Table 3.5: Average Scores for *ADAPT* 1995 – 1997

	1995			1996			1997		
DOMAIN (30 points possible per domain)	T	C	p <	T	C	p <	T	C	p <
Curriculum and Instruction: Promoting Children's Academic Development	20.1	11.6	.0001	17.5	12.5	.0049	18.9	14.0	.0032
Interaction: Supporting Children's Social and Emotional Development	21.9	14.5	.0001	19.5	14.6	.0019	18.9	14.7	.0042
Classroom Management: Facilitating Children's Overall Development	21.1	11.3	.0001	18.4	12.6	.0022	19.6	14.1	.0012
TOTAL SCORE	63.1	37.4	.0001	55.4	39.6	.0018	57.4	42.8	.0012

DAP was also assessed by teacher self-evaluation. Each spring, Transition teachers (but not Comparison teachers) ranked their own classrooms and schools for developmentally appropriate practice using the instrument, *Innovation Component Checklist for DAP (ICC-DAP).* This checklist covers nine areas. Results for 1993 to 1997 (see Table 3.6) show that teachers generally saw their classrooms as ranking relatively high for DAP over the five-year span of the Project. Ratings showed little variation from year to year, despite the fact that different teachers were surveyed over time as students moved up from grade to grade and as staff turnover occurred. On average, most aspects of DAP were ranked at or near 4.0 on a 5-point scale (5.0 being highest) with the exception of "staffing." This item averaged almost a full point lower overall and trended sharply lower from 1993 to 1997 (from 3.6 to 2.8). The lower staffing scores were supported by written teacher comments indicating that student-teacher ratios were too high.

Table 3.6: Teachers' Average Ratings of Their Use of DAP and Support for DAP – *Innovation Component Checklist*

	MEANS FOR 1993 – 97									
YEAR	COMP 1	COMP 2	COMP 3	COMP 4	COMP 5	COMP 6	COMP 7	COMP 8	COMP 9	OVERALL
1993	4.7	4.7	4.2	4.1	3.9	4.4	4.1	4.4	3.6	**4.2**
1994	4.0	3.9	3.7	4.2	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.2	**3.7**
1995	4.3	4.2	3.6	4.3	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.5	**3.9**
1996	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.5	3.6	4.0	2.6	**3.8**
1997	4.2	4.4	3.9	4.2	4.0	3.7	4.0	4.2	2.8	**3.9**
MEANS	**4.3**	**4.3**	**3.9**	**4.2**	**3.9**	**3.8**	**3.8**	**4.0**	**3.1**	**3.9**

Component 1: Teacher – Child Interaction
Component 2: Cultural and Linguistic Integration
Component 3: Curriculum
Component 4: Instruction
Component 5: Assessment
Component 6: Environment and Materials
Component 7: Parent–Teacher Relationships
Component 8: Teacher Qualifications
Component 9: Staffing

During focus group interviews, Transition school principals and teachers commented on DAP in their schools. Principals generally stated that professional development sessions on DAP had been a key strength of the Transition Project, and that DAP methods would flourish in the classrooms. Teachers in focus groups applauded their professional development opportunities, saying that they had made them more child-centered in their classrooms. They noted, however, that the three Transition schools varied markedly in their commitment to the DAP philosophy, and that each school's degree of commitment affected how strongly DAP took hold in individual Transition classrooms.

Site visit reports from the evaluation teams coordinated by the national research coordinating team also commented on evidence of DAP they found in Transition classrooms. In the annual reports of the national Transition research coordinating team from 1993 to 1996, evaluators noted observing a number of developmentally appropriate practices in Transition classrooms, including small group instruction, the use of learning centers, classroom environments rich in language, and readily available fine arts materials.

Evaluators completing the 1996 Program Implementation Profile (PIP) reported strong evidence of DAP, commenting that developmental practices had improved over time and that teacher training in DAP would have long term impacts. The PIP report, however, recognized that implementation of DAP varied at the three Transition sites. These evaluators also predicted a diminishing of the effects of Transition as time, staff turnover, and loss of Project funding took their toll.

WORKING WITH AT-RISK STUDENTS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Project developers expected that Transition teachers would become more skillful in working with at-risk children and that they would develop increased sensitivity to diverse cultures. Three instruments assessed this hypothesis.

On the *Assessment Profile* instrument mentioned earlier, scores on the Learning Environment and Curriculum subscales favored Transition classrooms across all three years, while scores on the Scheduling and Interacting subscales favored Transition classrooms during the final year of the Project. All four items specifically included factors considered important when working with at-risk children or addressing cultural diversity. The Learning Environment subscale assessed whether the arrangement of classroom space encourages child independence and whether the classroom environment reflects the individuality of each child, while the Curriculum subscale assessed such things as the degree of attention to cultural differences, child-guided learning, and individualization of the curriculum. The Scheduling and Interacting subscales included factors such as the amount of time allotted to child-guided activities, the variety of activities scheduled, the amount of positive interactions with students, and the degree to which students are treated fairly and without bias.

On the *ADAPT* instrument mentioned earlier, All domains favored Transition classrooms. Several subscales within these domains assessed teacher skills with at-risk children and teacher sensitivity to diverse cultures. Among these were items that looked at support for students' social and emotional development, encouragement of cooperative learning and self-regulation among children, adaptation of instruction to student interests and prior knowledge, and integration of multicultural issues into the curriculum.

Anna Berman
• Transition teacher

Before the Transition Project supported intensive professional development at her school, teacher Anna Berman had never considered "looping" with her classes. In fact, she'd never heard of it. The practice involves keeping a teacher with the same group of kids through two or more grades, then having the teacher "loop" back to the lower grade to follow a new set of students. The purpose is to allow teachers more time with students so they can better understand the children's individual learning styles.

Anna credits the Transition Project with stimulating her interest in this innovative technique. "Another teacher and I in the program decided to loop because we had been to a lot of conferences [about it] that were offered through the Transition Project... that and just being around Sandy [Foreman] and being in dialogue groups... and so we tried it."

Looping really starts to pay off during a teacher's second year with the same students. "It helps a lot being able to just start the year knowing exactly where the kids are and knowing where you need to take them... I feel like I saved three or four months, just started right in, I knew exactly where the kids were, what the next step should be... I didn't have to go through all that beginning of the year testing and wondering, and putting them in a group and seeing if it worked, then regrouping. Knowing [the students], I already knew how to motivate them individually."

Looping—and the home visits promoted by the Transition Project—also helped Anna's relationship with her students' families. "That was probably the biggest thing about the Transition Project... having to do the home visits at the beginning of the year. That really set the stage for the year. It made [the students] more comfortable with me, and the parents also... It's like at the beginning we all built a relationship together and it just kept going throughout the year. And now [without Transition] that's lacking at the beginning and [the parents] come a couple of times throughout the year, but I don't think they ever feel as comfortable with us as they did when [Transition] was ongoing."

The Transition Project's emphasis on professional development changed Anna's classroom environment in other ways, too. For example, it introduced her to the concept of developmentally appropriate practice, or DAP. The effect has carried on after the end of the Project. "[DAP] is a term that is still in my mind, that I'm always challenged with.... I've definitely moved more toward having the children engage in what their doing, and to have some choice so they would be self-motivated—you know, choice in topics that they write about or research... [I've learned] that kids can be responsible to make choices and to direct some of their own learning."

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On the ICC-DAP instrument mentioned earlier, the three domains ranked highest by teachers overall from 1993-1997 (see Table 3.6) were Teacher-Child Interaction, Cultural and Linguistic Integration, and Instruction. All three addressed skills considered important for working with at-risk students or making the curriculum culturally sensitive, such as helping children develop self-esteem, social competence and autonomy; helping children resist biases and learn empathy for others, viewing diversity in the classroom as an opportunity for learning; and allowing children to select many of their own activities and work individually or in small groups most of the time.

Collaboration

Project developers anticipated that Head Start, in collaboration with the public Transition schools, would identify effective strategies for collaboration, and develop a model for creating and disseminating systemic change.

To evaluate the Transition Project's success in improving collaboration amongparticipants, the *Survey of Collaboration* was given each year 1995-1997 to all Transition school principals, family advocates, and Transition teachers. The survey consists of a total of 20 items under three headings: "Project Mission and Vision," "Project Development and Organization," and "Key Leaders." Responses follow a Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree.) Mean ratings were calculated for each group. Principals, teachers, and family advocates. Results are shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7: Participant Group Average Responses to *Survey of Collaboration*

AREA	GROUP	1995	1996	1997
Project mission and vision	PRINCIPALS	4.2	4.0	4.2
	TEACHERS	3.9	3.2	3.9
	FAMILY ADVOCATES	3.1	3.6	3.6
Project development and organization	PRINCIPALS	4.1	4.2	4.2
	TEACHERS	3.7	3.5	3.7
	FAMILY ADVOCATES	3.2	3.5	3.7
Key leaders	PRINCIPALS	4.5	4.3	4.3
	TEACHERS	3.9	4.3	3.8
	FAMILY ADVOCATES	3.6	4.0	3.9

Ratings for individual items ranged broadly, from 2.8 to 5.0, and varied considerably among groups. Principals gave the highest ratings overall every year, while family advocates and teachers alternated places in giving lowest scores. Principals also frequently rated individual items one point or more higher than teachers or family advocates rating that same item, indicating different perspectives on the success of collaboration.

Overall, ratings remained consistent from year to year. For example, the average of all three groups' mean ratings was 3.8 in 1995 and 1996, and 3.9 in 1997. While these are not low ratings, they indicate that some areas of collaboration were not considered as successful as others, particularly among teachers and family advocates.

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Among the collaboration items consistently rated highest (> 4.0) each year 1995-1997 were those dealing with a) the opportunity for participants to discuss and have input on key issues; b) the effort made to consider cultural, racial, and ethnic differences; and c) the quality of the partnership among group members.

Among the items consistently rated lowest (< 3.5) were those dealing with a) school commitment to the Project; and b) the mechanisms available to deal with barriers such as turf issues and denial.

Table 3.7 shows *Survey of Collaboration* results according to the three subscales mentioned above. Average subscale ratings among the participant groups are very similar. However, the subscale dealing with key leaders is rated slightly higher. This domain covers issues related to the way that Project group members interact and communicate, consider cultural differences when planning transition strategies and activities, and whose organizational leaders are committed to the partnership. This subscale was the only one of the three to be rated at average at least a four over the three years the instrument was administered.

In the annual site visit reports of the national Transition research coordinating team from 1993 to 1996, evaluators noted that parent participation in the Project, and links to community service providers were major strengths of the Transition Project. Evaluators completing the 1996 Program Implementation Profile reported that most types of collaboration among partners occurred regularly.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

Case studies conducted on the Transition schools in 1995 provide some insight into the kinds of strategies that effectively support collaboration as well as those factors that might be considered barriers to successful collaboration. The effective strategies and barriers varied from school to school, with some factors considered to be strengths in one school and barriers at another.

Janice McGuirre
• Transition teacher

Kindergarten teacher Janice McGuirre remembers the Transition Project this way: "I never had so much professional development in 20 years of teaching." Professional development opportunities and the help of a family advocate were the defining features of the Transition Project for Janice.

With previous experience as a pre-school teacher, Janice says she felt predisposed to embrace the DAP principles that Transition supports, and so her enthusiasm for learning more about DAP did not surprise her. What did surprise her was the way that other teachers, and even the school principal, changed as a result of the Transition Project. Though some had little prior exposure to DAP, they soon started supplementing or entirely replacing their classroom approach with more developmentally appropriate practices. Now, Janice says, DAP has earned a permanent place in staff discussions of primary education.

Janice's own classroom strategy was also greatly affected, in particular by a week-long conference with Lilian Katz, developer of the "Project Approach" for teaching young children. The Project Approach is a constructivist method that, instead of building lessons around themes or units, relies on children as a primary resource in their own education, taking advantage of children's native interest in particular topics or problems in order to develop authentic research projects that actively engage them. As a result of the Katz conference, Janice and another teacher began conducting extended classroom projects in life science.

While Janice feels that the professional development aspect of Transition was most beneficial to her personally, she gives the distinction of "single biggest benefit of Transition" to the presence of the family advocates. It was the family advocates who scheduled home visits for the teachers prior to the beginning of each school year and translated for Spanish-speaking parents during the visits. These home visits created a crucial link between parents, teachers, and the school, Janice says. The benefits of that link were paid out throughout the year, especially for Spanish-speaking parents.

"Before [Transition], "Spanish-speaking parents would only come in if they had a problem," Janice recalls. But after meeting the teacher and working with the family advocate, these parents became comfortable with the school setting and began to see it as a positive environment. Because of this contact, many parents expanded their notion of the role they could play in their child's education.

But the effect of family advocates was even broader, says Janice. family advocates also worked with children in the classroom, helped parents advance their education and improve English language skills, and most importantly, helped the teachers in emergency situations. "I'd see a child with two rotten teeth or a blister in his mouth and I'd turn to the family advocate and she would get the child right to a dentist." While the district can also provide emergency referrals, response time may be much slower, Janice points out. "There are five schools to serve [in the district] and the resources are just spread too thin."

In retrospect, the Transition Project enhanced Janice's skills and experience as a teacher. It also connected her more closely with her students and their parents. She simply calls it "the best five years of my professional life."

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Following are some strengths of the Project as found at one or more sites. While these strengths are not specifically strategies, they point to areas that promote collaboration.

- ***Organizational/individual Support***: One school found support for the Project expressed at the district level. A district level program director sat on the Transition Advisory Committee for the first year of the Project and was knowledgeable about the Project's development and goals. Support of the teachers was also key to enhancing collaboration at one school. Their enthusiasm for the Project's components made them valuable assets in advancing the goals of Transition and facilitating smooth collaborative efforts.

- ***Matching philosophies or goals between school/district and Transition***: One school's existing orientation and goals matched those of the Transition Project to a large degree. Staff had prior training in DAP and prior experience in providing families with comprehensive services. Because a common language already existed with Transition, collaborative efforts to enhance comprehensive services and DAP started off at a higher level at this school.

- ***Strong links with service providers***: Two schools had strong partnerships with medical and family service providers. The Transition Project family advocates were able to draw upon these resources for families, thus freeing up time that would otherwise be spent trying to develop connections with community resources.

- ***Strong prior experience with DAP***: As mentioned earlier, one school had extensive prior experience with DAP. Consequently, the teaching staff was able to pursue additional training and extend their knowledge into more specific areas of interest to them. Because this school had little need for the Transition Project to concentrate on introducing the education component, more time could be devoted to other program components.

BARRIERS TO SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

Just as some features facilitated collaboration at the Transition schools, other features limited the likelihood of success.

- ***Lack of organizational/individual support for Transition Project philosophy***: The family-centered service philosophy and DAP were too different for the teachers at principal at one school where traditional views of education dominated. While some teachers did change their views somewhat, a lack of fit between philosophies remained.

Jessie and Raul Valenzuela
• Transition family

For Jessie Valenzuela, the central focus of the Transition Project was the family advocate. "The family advocate," she says, "was always there for me when I had a question. The advocates were like friends."

Jessie and her husband, Raul, have two children who participated in the Transition Project. Both children originally participated in Head Start also, while four other Valenzuela children were never involved in either program.

Jessie recalls that the advocates assisted families in a number of ways. For example, they provided information when requested and sometimes offered direct assistance, such as food boxes. The family advocate also helped Jessie's family enroll in AHCCCS (Arizona's version of Medicaid), and the advocate was willing to make home visits when Jessie was not able to come to school.

Jessie was particularly impressed by the active communication of her advocate. She might be in the classroom talking with the teacher about some problem related to her child's education, and she would discover the teacher already had a plan because she had been briefed earlier by the advocate. In turn, Jessie would often hear about classroom issues from the advocate.

Before the Project ended, Jessie's family had moved out of the Transition school area. She reports that her two Transition children are thriving at their new school—both earning spots on the Principal's honor roll. Jessie, however, credits Head Start more than Transition for their recent successes.

- ***School/district philosophies not congruent with goals of Transition Project***: One district's policies toward early childhood education and assessment differed greatly from the goals of the Transition Project. For example, class sizes and a strict adherence to the existing assessment system in one district were inconsistent with DAP. Collaboration at the school level was not necessarily impeded because of this difference, but the potential for change was limited. Teachers understood this situation and it affected their attempts to modify their own classroom environments.

- ***Limited parent involvement***: One school experienced very low parent involvement, especially among Spanish-speaking families. This inhibited communication and discouraged the teachers' and family advocates' efforts to collaborate. Through perseverance, however, the Transition Project staff increased participation and made strides toward collaboration.

- ***High turnover among family advocates and the addition of new teachers***: Each of the schools faced high turnover of family advocates from year to year. New teachers were also added each year as the Project progressed through the grades. Because collaboration is based upon good communication, as well as on building and maintaining relationships, turnover and the addition of new participants presented a considerable barrier to the Project.

- ***Poor communication between participant groups***: Communication between teachers and family advocates was listed by two of the three schools as a challenge. At one school, teachers were unfamiliar with the types of services that Transition could provide. High turnover of family advocates contributed to this situation and hampered collaborative efforts.

- ***Isolation of the Transition Project from the school***: At two schools, the Project's isolation from the rest of the school posed a barrier to spreading Transition practice. Teachers reported that other staff at the school viewed them as separate and did not know what Transition was about. Clearly, this was a major barrier. Attempts to address it were made, but it remained a challenge.

Creating and Disseminating a Model for Systemic Change

One program goal stated at the outset of Transition was to develop and disseminate a model for creating systemic change. This model would provide strategies for smoothing transition practices between Head Start and the public schools as well as from grade to grade. While the public schools proved to be a difficult system to penetrate, a number of practices were successfully introduced, and by the completion of the Transition Project the management team had developed two useful handbooks for making their learning experiences available to others.

Each handbook was designed to serve a different purpose and was oriented to a different audience. In combination, the two handbooks can bring both preschool staff and parents together for successful transitions.

The first handbook is entitled, "Smooth Transitions: Making the Journey from Preschool to Kindergarten Together." It was developed as a guide for a practitioner audience consisting of Head Start program planners, Head Start directors, teachers, and staff of other preschool programs. It is written from the perspective of the preschool program and characterizes the transition process as a journey.

The handbook is comprehensive. It names the types of partners that must be identified and worked with in order to create successful transitions; details the development of the Transition team and a Transition Action Plan. It provides examples of relevant documents; describes strategies that will increase the likelihood of success; and focuses on promoting continuity in a number of areas, such as classroom, family support services, parent involvement, records and information, and training and meetings of staff. It is also filled with suggestions about evaluating a program's progress.

The handbook has application to a wide range of programs and has been distributed to a variety of groups and individuals including the superintendents of the school districts with whom SWHD works, principals in all the schools, kindergarten teachers who will receive SWHD's Head Start students, the regional Head Start program office, all the Head Start programs in Arizona, and those in the Western region. Future plans are to use the document for training family advocates and Head Start teachers. The Transition project manager (who was primary author of the handbook) also plans to use it in presentations for early childhood education organizations and other training projects.

The second handbook is titled, "Southwest Head Start: Ready for School—A Handbook to Help Families Prepare for the Start of Kindergarten." This booklet serves as a parent guide for smoothing transitions from preschool into Kindergarten. It includes ideas for helping both adults and children before school starts, the first day of school, and during the school year, and it provides a checklist for families making a first school visit. The handbook is written in both English and Spanish and has been disseminated to parents of Head Start children at the year-end home visit and parent meeting. Future plans include disseminating these to teachers as well.

The final collaboration goal called for identifying what a successful collaboration actually looks like. Determining whether this goal was accomplished is difficult. On the one hand, strategies have been highlighted that promote collaboration. On the other hand, data from the *Survey of Collaboration* reveals disparities between groups as to the level of collaboration.

While the collaboration was rated successful at giving participants input and considering the needs of the population served, school district commitment to Transition practices was not viewed by many teachers and family advocates as genuine and was not enough to overcome some barriers, such as incongruence between Transition and school/district philosophy, a factor that has direct bearing on the adoption of new practice and policy change.

In the 1994 annual report, local evaluators presented the analysis of Melaville and Blank regarding cooperative versus collaborative partnerships as a framework for viewing collaboration.[14] Their analysis revealed that the Transition Project was much more of a cooperative partnership than a truly collaborative one. Some of these elements have little to do with the intent or motivation of the groups involved but are based simply upon organizational features or limitations. For example, in collaborative partnerships, each partner can use funding leverage to advance collaborative goals, whereas in cooperative partnerships, the members network and share information. In the Transition Project, the public schools did not have authority to substantially change funding in favor of Transition goals. Head Start and the schools did, however, share information in their efforts to meet goals.

Also, in collaborative partnerships, partners are able, politically or legally, to negotiate programmatic and policy changes and to make necessary budgetary and administrative changes, while in cooperative arrangements, the partners can advocate for, but are not empowered to negotiate policy changes. In the Transition Project, most public school staff and administration supported practices such as family service workers, but they lacked the authority to decide how these kinds of services would be continued in the future, nor did they have the authority to allocate funds for new priorities.

After review of survey and focus group data, and hours of observation of the collaborative process, it is clear that, in as much as the Transition Project can accurately be described as a collaborative enterprise, it was carried out successfully. Overall, for most of its duration, it was more accurate to consider this Project as an example of cooperative partnership. However, toward the end of the Project certain school policies changed which made the partnership more collaborative and also promoted Transition-like goals. Most notably, districts began to give their schools more budget authority which enabled them to leverage funding and allocate future resources to meet common goals. In addition, a few of the schools and districts received competitive grants for specific programs such as dual language and the state early childhood block grant. This funding strengthened collaborative efforts as well.

Policy Change

The final evaluation question asked whether the results of the Project would affect state and local level public policies and fiscal support to reflect a more comprehensive plan for addressing child and family needs in a holistic manner. This does not appear to have taken place.

While Transition Project management have made annual presentations to the school district partners, no transition policies have been revised at the district level. At the state level, also, no evidence suggests that Transition Project results have so far contributed to a shift in policy toward a more holistic view of families and children and the development of comprehensive plans for addressing child and family needs. However, Southwest Human Development staff are involved in a variety of child and family policy forums, such as the Phoenix Violence Prevention Initiative and the Arizona Head Start Collaboration which are attempting to influence policy decisions about children and families. To the extent that the agency is able to bring relevant lessons from the Head Start Transition Project to the discussion, the Project may make some contribution to local and state level policy change.

Learning to Collaborate:
• One School's Experience

When the Transition Project ended in 1997, each school found itself with no family advocates, no additional monies for teacher training, and no comprehensive program targeting disadvantaged families. But according to Carol, an administrator at one of the former Transition schools, they found themselves with something else—a vision.

"I would say the effects of Head Start Transition are more systemic than just a single program," Carol says. "I see its impact as influencing the mission of the school and its relationship to families. People here have become more aware that we always need to be thinking: How can we communicate better with our families? How can we bring people into the discussion even if they don't see that as their role in a school?"

Community Worker

As an outgrowth of its new vision, the school solicited a grant for a "community worker" with duties based partially on the role of family advocates. For example, the community worker helps welcome parents to the classroom—much as family advocates did—by helping teachers develop parent activities. "Our experience with Transition has helped us in that regard," says Carol.

In addition, the school's community worker and social worker undertook special training on how to develop leadership among parents in the local community. "To even start thinking that way is really the influence of our work with Head Start and Transition," says Carol. "And there are other kinds of programs we are involved in today that we probably wouldn't have started had we not been involved in Head Start and Transition."

Family Literacy

One example is the Family Literacy Program sponsored by Literacy Volunteers. Parents enrolled in Family Literacy attend ESL and GED held at the church next to the school in the morning, then they are scheduled as volunteers in their kids' classrooms during the week. The drawback for teachers is that the program requires coordinated planning time—time they have difficulty finding. But the Transition experience helped teachers be receptive.

"When Literacy Volunteers came, a couple of the teachers said, "This is like what we had in the Transition Project and it really doesn't have to be a lot of your planning time." And so two teachers talked the others into it based on their previous experience with a similar program in the Transition Project."

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Health Clinic

Another example is the new health clinic that operates one day a week at the school and is funded through the state tobacco tax. The clinic was borne out of a need to get medical services for "notch kids"—those too poor for private medical insurance, but too well off for welfare. Operated by a nurse practitioner group affiliated with ASU, the clinic is based on a Head Start model of basic physicals followed by periodic check-ups. "I see a pretty direct line," says Carol. "Ten years ago we never would have thought to bring medical services into the school. Seeing Head Start and hearing them talk about how they use physicals and medical referrals to help families headed us in that direction. Seeing that you can identify kids who need medical services and deal with it in a manageable way is another fairly significant impact from Head Start and Transition."

Welcome Center

The school's welcome center also took shape under Transition Project influences, according to Carol. "Several schools around already have welcome centers or entry points, but some we looked at didn't seem too welcoming to us. Testing and registration has to be a part of it, but we were also concerned about welcoming families and establishing good communications with them."

The concept was discussed at Transition meetings for awhile, and it even received some material support from the Transition Project, but much more important, says Carol, was the Head Start model that the school had for dealing with parents. "A lot of what we know in that area we've learned from Head Start. We have always looked to them as a resource when it comes to communicating with families."

The Collaborative Piece

As the welcome center illustrates, the school staff do not always differentiate between the effects of Head Start and Transition. Both programs have been at the school for a number of years, and both have been operated by the same agency, and so have similar features. What does come through from the overall experience is a positive model for collaboration with an outside organization.

"It is much easier for schools to run their own programs than to have other agencies come in because there are always tugs and pulls of power, and you either say goodbye to each other or you sit down and work it out," says Carol. "That takes a lot of people's time. But because of Transition, and seeing that when you work through those hard times you get some positive effects that pay off many times over, I think we have become more receptive to other agencies and groups that show interest in working with us."

Such receptivity is crucial, says Carol, because working with "outsiders" will be the reality of the future for tightly budgeted public schools. "Given where we are with finances, we have to learn another way to work. We have to work collaboratively with a variety of other people. And that whole collaborative piece isn't talked about enough."

"How do you learn to network with all these people and get everything going in positive ways?" She asks. "When I think of our school history, we did it first with Head Start and Transition."

Chapter 4

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Chapter 4 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF TRANSITION

Introduction

Evaluation of the Transition Project involved five years of extensive data collection and analysis. As a result, we can now draw a number of conclusions regarding the effects of the Project on its intended beneficiaries. This chapter presents those conclusions.

The chapter begins with a discussion of program results by the now-familiar evaluation categories of children, families, system, and public policy. Embedded in this discussion are lessons that can be drawn from the results, focussed questions for further study, and operational recommendations for future programs of this type. Afterward, the chapter addresses broader issues involving public programs that target families in poverty, and it concludes with public policy recommendations based on the knowledge gained from the Transition Project.

Discussion of Program Results

As presented in earlier chapters, quantitative data provide few measurable differences between Transition and Comparison group children and families. Qualitative data, on the other hand, provide a picture of where and how systemic changes occurred, how collaborative partnerships worked, and what future attempts at collaboration can gain from this experience. The sections immediately following discuss results and recommendations by evaluation category.

CHILDREN AND TRANSITION

Student outcomes provide no convincing evidence that the Transition Project achieved its desired child goals in terms of cognitive, social, or emotional gains over Comparison schools, nor did the Project produce better student attitudes about school or student adjustments to school than Comparison schools. Both groups gained overall academic competency, but by third grade were losing ground compared to their age mates in the test's normative sample group. In spring testing during kindergarten, both groups' reading and math levels were about half a grade lower than the norm (i.e., at a level that the norming group scored near the beginning of kindergarten). By third grade, their scores were more than a full grade lower than the norm—comparable to the average child in the fifth month of second grade.[1]

Both Transition and Comparison groups, however expressed positive feelings about school and learning. How Head Start affected their test scores and their positive attitudes toward learning and their adjustment to school cannot be determined because the evaluation did not include a non-Head Start control group.

The Transition Project component that most explicitly addressed children's education was the one emphasizing developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) in the classroom. Given that no research findings show DAP alone improves scores on standardized achievement tests, the hypothesis that Transition would produce gains may have been misguided. In fact, the evaluation found that students who had the highest achievement in 1994 also had teachers who used a combination of DAP and more traditional teaching methods. This suggests that the combination approach may be the best classroom practice, and it should be investigated in future research.

DAP might seem more likely to produce gains in student attitudes and emotional adjustments to school, rather than direct educational gains, because it emphasizes the importance of the socio-emotional domain in the early years of children's education. Indeed, Transition children showed a positive trend on the *Child's Adjustment to School* instrument, while Comparison and Attrition group students did not. Perhaps given a longer time frame, some of these differences might reach significance. This would constitute a worthy follow-up study, but the evaluators recommend using a more appropriate measure of attitude if research were to continue. The response range of the instrument used in this study was considered to be too restricted to detect any differences that may have existed.

Additional analyses of children's outcome measures were performed by local evaluators to determine whether any of the Project's central variables (e.g., time in treatment) were important predictors of outcomes. Results, however, primarily illustrated only the predictive quality of kindergarten test scores—particularly reading—on a variety of third grade test scores. Although this relationship is interesting, it is difficult to interpret. Does it point to the importance of kindergarten reading-readiness skills? Is it an artifact of IQ? Without a study to specifically examine this relationship, we can only speculate.

FAMILIES AND TRANSITION

Most families in both the Transition and Comparison groups improved their circumstances over time: they reported higher employment and income, and lower mobility and enrollment in assistance programs. Transition Project participants, however, did not show any significant advantage over Comparison group participants. For example, Transition families did not earn higher incomes than Comparison families, were not employed at higher rates, were not less likely to be enrolled in public assistance at the end of the study, and they did not acquire greater parenting skills. Other indicators for GED/ESL participation, school involvement, and communication also show no significant differences between groups.

While it is a positive circumstance that all families became more self-sufficient, the lack of differences between treatment groups is disappointing. This is especially so considering that family services were based on the work of the family advocates—widely regarded as the cornerstone of the Transition Project. Nevertheless, it cannot be stated with certainty that the Project's family support services did not work. Many factors contribute to this ambiguity.

First, the design of the national study may have diluted results. According to the national design, family advocates were required to provide services to an entire classroom of students and their families, even if only one Transition study child was in that classroom. Second, the study participants in the Transition classrooms may have had fewer needs than the other families simply because they were former Head Start families. In other words, previous Head Start services may have already resolved some family problems. Third, no documentation details the level of need of each family and the intensity of service provided by the Advocates, therefore no analysis of effects can be made. So, while anecdotal evidence demonstrates the benefit of Transition on some families, the statistical impact of these results may have washed out in the averages. Furthermore, the fact that 15-34 percent of Comparison group families also received direct Head Start services through other children in the family leads the evaluators to believe that a substantial amount of treatment group contamination took place, further complicating analysis.

SERVICE DELIVERY QUESTIONS

Specific delivery of services, hiring practices, and staff training fell outside the scope of this study because, by design, the evaluation was not intended to be process-oriented. Nevertheless, the annual examination of data related to systemic change naturally focussed upon the service-delivery process to some degree. Consequently, some questions arose related to service delivery and other process-related items, and these point to the need for further examination. The questions and discussion below offer a point of departure.

Why didn't family advocates, with low case loads, have better results than similar providers at Comparison schools with much higher case loads? About half of the family advocates that SWHD hired for the Transition Project were degreed, which is a much higher percentage than advocates in regular Head Start. Nevertheless, a discussion of hiring practices is relevant here. Barbara Hanna Wasik, a professor of child development at the University of North Carolina, researched the effects of home visiting programs, and she notes that hiring paraprofessionals presents distinct advantages and disadvantages.[16] On the positive side, paraprofessionals may be familiar with local resources, and share important values and culture with program participants. This can increase trust in the program. On the other hand, paraprofessionals may not possess the clinical skills necessary to deal with serious personal problems that client families encounter. Therefore, paraprofessionals require intensive program support, training, and supervision. In the case of the Transition Project, a review of records and interviews with both teachers and family advocates shows that the advocates underutilized or were not uniformly knowledgeable about some of the services with which they linked their families, specifically, those relating to employability and employment. SWHD managers should revisit the agency's hiring, training, and supervising practices to determine whether they are sufficient to support their advocates' work.

What were the expectations for family advocates, how was their success measured, and how well did they respond to the requests of their clients and their supervisors? In recent years, federal, state, and local agencies have been increasingly held accountable for producing results from public funding. Consequently, service managers have had to rethink programs and adopt a more "outcome-oriented" model. This is no small task, but management expectations of staff are critical to making service programs succeed. In the case of the Transition Project, some parents and teachers noted a lack of responsiveness on the part of family advocates. Managers must consider how they defined an effective family advocate, what the expectations are for responding to clients and supervisors, and finally what the consequences should be for family advocates who did not prove effective.

What is the most efficient method for distributing limited resources—should you serve the families most in need or those most likely to succeed? Setting service priorities is one of the most challenging responsibilities for service managers. Yet it is clear that families vary in terms of their level of need, readiness to improve their circumstances, and ability to make changes happen. One way to prioritize may be to develop a profile that identifies families most likely to benefit from services, and then concentrate services on those families. Certainly, such "creaming" may create some problems. Nevertheless, in order to make the best use of available services, future program managers should attempt to determine which parents are most motivated to participate at a high level, and records should be kept of service provision and intensity to help uncover differences in results. This strategy is already being considered in another study commissioned by the Arizona Head Start Collaboration Project and SWHD. As part of this study, which will determine how Arizona Head Start agencies impact families, Morrison Institute researchers are helping develop indicators of family need, readiness, and service intensity so that results can reflect these central factors.

What is the best way to maintain service continuity? Focus group interviews contributed much to the evaluators' understanding of service delivery through the Transition Project. Interviews with families and teachers, for example, revealed a common concern about continuity for family advocates. They questioned: Should advocates follow families as children move up through the grade levels, or should advocates stay with the same teachers from year to year? On the one hand, family relationships seem to benefit if an effective advocate stays with them throughout. On the other hand, collaboration on classroom services seems to benefit if the advocate stays with one teacher. The negative sides of both points were demonstrated each year of the Project when family advocate turnover and the addition of new teachers made new assignments necessary often breaking up prior relationships between teachers and advocates and with their families. Consequently communications suffered, as did perceptions of service quality.

One way to create effective continuity for advocates, teachers, and families may be the "looping" strategy pioneered by a few teachers and advocates in the Project. Both the teacher and the advocate stayed with the same set of students (and families) through two grade levels before looping back to an earlier grade and picking up a new set of students. This strategy should be tried with more teachers if coordinated services are truly to follow individual families.

Other concerns also emerged from focus group interviews. Among the most often-repeated:

- too much of the advocates' time was taken up by meetings or paperwork
- turnover was too high among advocates and too much time was spent waiting for them to "get up to speed"
- turnover among advocates hampered relationship-building with families

Of course some paperwork must be done in order to document progress, and meetings must occasionally be scheduled if joint planning is to occur. Some degree of staff turnover is also inevitable, especially in a project like Transition where its life span was limited, and people looked for work that paid substantially better than the family advocate salary. Yet these three items are management issues that must be continually addressed as programs try to strike the most efficient ratio between time spent on administrative necessities and time spent on direct service. No simple formula exists, but the goal should be to maximize staff contact with families.

Evaluator observations also found that one of the greatest challenges for family advocates was a social service system that is fragmented at best, and nonexistent at worst. With families working through many difficult circumstances, one small glitch—such as a transportation failure—could mean a total loss of service. Why, for example, schedule a medical appointment for a family if the family members cannot get to the doctor's office? SWHD has shown tremendous initiative and creativity in addressing service delivery gaps. In addition to providing or securing transportation when possible, SWHD has developed networks with dentists, and secured service contracts to provide care for those children whose parents did not qualify for AHCCCS but could not afford dental coverage. Advocates also provided translating services during school events and in other instances where language barriers arose, such as during kindergarten registration, the first day of school, or in doctor's offices.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE AND TRANSITION

As an evaluation goal, systemic change presents some difficulties. How much change is needed and how long must it persist in order for it to qualify as "systemic"? Program goals that calls for systemic change in schools face additional difficulties because schools are dynamic enterprises in which both the workers and the products—students—undergo substantial evolution regardless of any special treatment or funded program. Treatment effects, therefore, can be completely masked by a school's natural and pervasive environment of change. Among the most influential factors of school change, both positive and negative, are the following:

- normal development and progression of students from grade to grade
- inevitable turnover among staff, particularly in less affluent districts
- changes in administration and modification of school goals
- vagaries in funding and the availability of programs
- transformation of neighborhoods
- fluctuation in economic trends
- metamorphoses in educational beliefs and styles, including those based on theory or research
- political changes at all levels—local school boards, the state department of education, the governor's office, the state legislature, and at the national level

In spite of the many factors that affect the impact—or even visibility—of systemic change in schools, substantial evidence indicates the Transition Project produced some noticeable effect on both the public school system and the Head Start agency involved. While most of the data assessing systemic change were collected only at Transition schools, trends still can be gleaned from the data.

In many cases, transition services became better coordinated for families. This happened when collaboration occurred among Advocates, public school teachers, Head Start teachers, and social service agencies. Coordination was most apparent when continuity was maintained among all the parties involved.

The Transition Project's focus on DAP also created systemic impacts. Some of this result could be attributed to a self-selection process: teachers with a predisposition toward DAP may have intentionally gravitated to the Project, thereby creating a higher probability of success. Nevertheless, Transition teachers clearly gained a more thorough understanding of the DAP approach each year as a result of the Project, and they increased their DAP skills in the classroom. This occurred because the Transition Project produced a powerful model for carrying out an effective teacher training program. The Transition Project manager, who was well-versed in DAP herself, was largely responsible for this success.

Some effective principles can be gleaned from the strategies the Project manager employed. For example, she consistently:

- listened to and addressed teachers concerns about their classroom practice and followed up on them
- provided current literature on DAP to teachers, whether solicited or unsolicited
- enabled teachers to attend relevant conferences and workshops by providing funding for conference fees and substitute teachers to cover their classes
- made time during meetings to discuss teacher reactions to readings and conferences, and to answer general questions
- supported teachers' efforts to acquire more expertise, implement their current knowledge of DAP, and take risks

The Transition Project also effected widespread changes in the way teachers work with at-risk students, and it increased their sensitivity to diverse cultures. The former change was partially accomplished by training in DAP. Both changes, however, were largely expedited by the introduction into classrooms of bilingual and neighborhood based advocates. Through the advocates' efforts to make teachers more comfortable with home visits and parents more comfortable in the classroom, an environment of mutual understanding between teachers and families developed.

This led, in some cases, to improved parent involvement. Increased sensitivity to cultures also spread school-wide due to the Transition Project. At the beginning of the Project, schools had few bilingual support staff. By Project-end, each school considered bilingualism as essential to meeting their student and family population's needs. As an example, school newsletters are now typically printed in both English and Spanish.

What about the question of duration? Will any of these "systemic" impacts persist beyond the end of the Project? It is reasonable to assume that without advocates in the classrooms, home visits by teachers and other staff will cease, particularly for families that are monolingual Spanish-speaking. And though some schools already have a social service worker on staff with some responsibilities similar to those of an advocate, the case loads these staff members carry are many times higher than those of advocates, so the intensity of services to families will undoubtedly suffer, as will coordination of services in individual classrooms.

In a larger sense, however, Transition appears to have created some lingering effects. Because of the collaborative and partnering experiences that Transition has provided, lines of communication have been opened between school staff and other agencies, and a willingness has been fostered among some staff to consider alternative solutions to enigmatic problems. These types of systemic effects are not as tangible as, say, referral frequencies or ratings of classroom practice, but they are clearly in keeping with the Transition model—and they may be more far-reaching in the long run. Systemic changes are likely to persist as long as a critical mass of school and collaborating agency staff continue to create positive experiences together by tackling educational and social problems as partners both inside and outside the schools.

COLLABORATION

Like systemic change, collaboration presents an ambiguous goal that is not easily defined or measured. Moreover, the concept is often unclear to those who are engaged in it. As mentioned earlier, the work of Melaville and Blank suggest that the Transition Project was technically more of a cooperative partnership than a collaboration. Nevertheless, a good deal was learned from the Project about working with other agencies toward a common goal. In addition, the Arizona Head Start Transition Project held an advantage over some other sites nationally because SWHD already had ongoing positive relationships with the Transition schools through existing Head Start programs at the schools. Still, much variation occurred among the three Transition schools.

One of the primary factors that influenced success in working with other agencies was the readiness of the partners. Just as families may be ready (or not) to change, schools can also be characterized in this way. One school entered the Project clearly more ready than the others. This school was farther advanced with DAP training, had existing links with some social services, and had a philosophy consistent with Transition goals. While barriers to collaboration were not absent at this school, less time was needed to surmount the barriers and move forward.

The other Transition schools, while less ready upon entering the Project, were not precluded from developing collaborative relationships. Their effort, however, required more communication and patience. From this experience, we might conclude that communication and patience, along with readiness, are the most important factors in creating a successful collaboration.

Readiness also implies support, another critical factor in collaboration. The vignette titled, "One School's Experience," described in Chapter 3 underscores the importance of having staff support for collaborative efforts. Both individual and organizational support were needed to keep the efforts on track, particularly when barriers appeared.

Several important barriers to collaboration occurred for Transition Project personnel. First among these was staff turnover among family advocates—a situation that creates the potential for breakdown in communication between groups. Added to this was the expansion of the Transition Project to new teachers every year, a factor that served to forestall significant buildup of momentum for Transition. Collaboration was further impeded by the knowledge that the Project would lose its funding at the end of five years. Given these factors, the Transition Project collaboration was probably as successful as it could be.

Ultimately, both Southwest Human Development and the public schools involved became more aware of the benefits and pitfalls of collaborative endeavors as a result of the Transition Project. All developed an understanding of the time and patience required to be successful. From this experience, also, came three lessons that should be highlighted. Collaborative partners must:

- retain key personnel and quickly train new personnel
- possess staff and organizational support for the same goals and philosophies
- use communication, patience, and experience to keep collaborative efforts on track

SWHD is currently applying its substantial experience in collaboration to a state-funded project that requires collaboration with other community-based service providers in developing a new child care center for low-income working families.

Successful collaboration also appeared to produce an unexpected side effect: program blurring. When programs blended closely, as did Head Start and Head Start Transition, individual services and effects become indistinguishable to the beneficiaries. The story of Jessie and Raul Valenzuela's family illustrates that point, as did comments made in focus group interviews with some families. Instead of being viewed as a separate program, the Transition Project was viewed by some participants as merely an extension of their previous experience with Head Start. This should be considered a symptom of success.

Effects of Transition on Public Policies

The final goal of the Transition Project was to impact state policy with the results of the Project. At this date, there is no evidence that this has occurred, but given how public policy is set, it may be unreasonable to expect one project's results to be sufficiently powerful to stimulate any changes in the short term. A better way to affect state policy may be through a coalition of organizations with similar goals. Transition Project personnel are currently assisting two such coalitions by applying the experiences they gained from the Project.

One coalition is the Arizona Head Start Collaboration Project, which operates under the auspices of the Governor's Division for Children. Its members are drawn from all state and tribal Head Start agencies in Arizona. The aim of this partnership is to create an infrastructure of collaborative policy, planning, and service delivery in priority areas: health, child care, welfare, education, literacy, and activities related to children with disabilities.[17] SWHD personnel bring a great amount of experience to this organization armed with their developing research expertise, involvement with the regional Head Start training center, and lessons learned from their experience with demonstration projects such as Transition.

The second such coalition is the Phoenix Violence Prevention Initiative (PVPI), which in early 1997 convened a wide range of organizations and civic leaders to develop Phoenix's first comprehensive violence prevention strategy. At the end of March 1998, the PVPI steering committee had publicly issued support for four bills seeking legislative approval.[18]

Three of these bills were comprehensive and family-centered in their approach: a domestic violence bill that creates stiffer penalties for domestic violence and provides notice to victims; a "Kids Care" bill that supports health care for children of the working poor; and an extension of the "Healthy Families" child abuse prevention program that identifies families at higher risk of abuse and intervenes through prevention and an intensive home visiting program. (SHWD operates the Healthy Families program in Maricopa County.) All three of these bills were passed during the summer of 1998.[19]

PUBLIC POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Recent research may provide an explanation for the Transition Project's paucity of measurable effects, and also suggest a direction for future programs. In 1998, psychologists Sharon and Craig Ramey performed a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of early intervention programs for children and families. Their analysis identified a number of principles associated with strong and lasting changes in development.[20] Three of these principles apply directly to the Transition Project:

- Program Breadth and Flexibility
- Program Intensity
- Direct Provision of Learning Experiences

The design and implementation of the Transition Project showed strong consistency with the first of these principles—it had both breadth of services and a great deal of flexibility. The Project, however, was noticeably lacking in the other two areas. It did not provide intensive services to families, nor did it provide direct educational intervention and learning experiences to children.

What is the threshold for program intensity according to the Rameys? Their review of research concluded that programs were more likely to produce measurable, longer-lasting benefits if they offered services more than one time per week to two generations of a family (e.g., parent and child). Clearly, the Transition Project's services were far below this benchmark—family advocates averaged only two home visits per family per year.

Regarding educational experiences, the Rameys found that direct interventions for children produced larger and more enduring changes than peripheral interventions. The Transition Project design, however, relied heavily on peripheral interventions: its goal was to bolster the support system surrounding children through services to families and teachers. While this goal is worthy, and one that is supported by some research, direct intervention may be more effective. For example, the Johns Hopkins University program, Success for All, provides support services as part of the overall strategy, but its greatest strength is direct tutoring for children.

Public Policy Recommendations

Any longitudinal study of a social program such as Transition naturally lends itself to consideration of public policy implications. Based on the results of the Head Start Transition Project and relevant research in this area, the evaluators make the following public policy recommendations:

- **RFP evaluation processes and standards should be reformed to favor programs that provide intensive services.** Many requests for proposals (RFPs) specify comprehensive services as a factor in awarding grants. Often, the winning proposal promises the greatest number of services, but the services promised must be spread thinly. A more effective RFP evaluation process would select programs that can deliver focussed and intensive services, so that they will provide the greatest potential for enduring effect.

- **Program designs should focus on attainable goals.** Federal funds should support programs that set specific, attainable, and measurable goals. These goals—and how they will be measured—should be determined early in the design process, not inferred afterward from ambiguous proposal language. While some changes to original program designs are inevitable, particularly in continuous improvement models, a focus on measurable goals should keep program services on track and minimize modifications.

- **Accountability for results should be the cornerstone of new program designs and evaluation.** The concept of accountability has been translated into federal law by the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. Consequently, Federal agencies are now held responsible for producing program results rather than for merely complying with regulations and measuring program "inputs." One positive outgrowth is that state and local governments—and even non-profits—have begun to create performance benchmarks and standards (e.g., state education standards for student competencies). If future funded programs are to show the effects they achieve, program developers must consider accountability measures in their designs to ensure that program evaluations will capture results.

- **The value of large-scale demonstration projects must be weighed against the expense and associated threats to validity.** Demonstration projects with a broad scope, such as the Transition Project, usually have funding costs that run correspondingly high. Yet they promise vast accumulations of data. Nevertheless, they can fall victim to difficulties that threaten their validity, such as widespread variations in services and data collection; cumbersome program modifications; and conflicts over regional values and ethical concerns. Attempts to strike a balance between the need for regional variability and the need for standardization in research protocols and data collection often create a source of tension. But when data collection and program implementation vary greatly from site to site, the statistical methods designed to control such factors can be overwhelmed.

Differing values and ethical conflicts among site directors in a large project can also affect research validity because resolution of these issues may compromise the study's practicality. In the Transition Project, ethical conflicts led to a decision to provide the services of a family advocate to every child in a classroom even if that classroom had only one study subject enrolled—a practice that diluted the services of the family advocates and minimized the probability that significant differences would appear between Transition and Comparison group families. With a smaller project, this compromise might have been avoided.

- **Future HHS research should focus on determining the long-term effects of the Head Start Program, not solely on new demonstration projects.** An April 1997 GAO study concludes that insufficient research on Head Start precludes wise public policy decisions on the program. The best use of HHS Head Start research money, therefore, would be to support a well-designed, high quality, longitudinal study—perhaps one similar to the Perry preschool research that followed Head Start children into their late 20s. This type of study is rarely funded because of expense and logistics, but the alternative is to speculate on short-term research that may have little generality to broader populations.

- **New programs should align their goals with Welfare-to-Work reforms.** As welfare reform carries forward, it will substantially affect the implementation of most new social service programs. Common sense dictates that new programs avoid conflicts with welfare reform. Future funding should, therefore, require that programs integrate their goals with the aims of welfare reform, either through direct job counseling and training services, or through collaboration with programs and agencies that provide such services.

Endnotes

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11. This paragraph is taken from the abstract of an unpublished manuscript titled "Developmentally Appropriate Practice for the Education of Head Start Children: Comparisons of Three Instructional Settings" by Stafford, M. E., Whitman Ahern, P., and Greene, A. (Correspondence may be directed to Mary E. Stafford, Division of Psychology in Education, College of Education, Arizona State University, P.O. Box 870611, Tempe, AZ 85287-0611).

12. This study was conducted as part of Transition Project researcher, Kathleen Shaw's M.A. research project. To obtain further information, write to Kathleen Shaw, Division of Psychology in Education, College of Education," Arizona State University, P.O. Box 870611, Tempe, AZ 85287-0611.

13. There are a number of studies that discuss the problems associated with testing children in a second language including the following: Valdez, G. and Figueroa, R. (1994), *Bilingualism and testing: A special case of bias*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex; Garcia, G.E. (1994), *Equity challenges in authentically assessing students from diverse backgrounds*. The Educational Forum, 59, 64-72.

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17. This description is taken directly from a press release from the Arizona Governor's Division for Children, titled Arizona Head Start Collaboration Project, dated March 1996.

18. Phoenix Violence Prevention Initiative (PVPI) — statement of support by Jack A. Henry and Frank Fairbanks, co-chairs of the PVPI Steering Committee in March 30, 1998 Mesa Tribune editorial "Support measures to help children."

19. The fourth bill would provide school resource officers to schools. This bill did not pass.

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Summary of Findings...

...FROM TRANSITION PROJECT EVALUATION

Evaluation Question	Finding
Children	
1. Do Head Start (HS) children in Transition classrooms maintain and/or show gains to a greater degree than HS children in Comparison classrooms on the following indicators:	
a) cognitive skills	a) differences on standardized measures for math favor Comparison; differences on vocabulary favor Transition; no significant differences on reading
b) social and emotional development	b) few differences favor Comparison
c) general health	c) no significant differences
d) adjustment to school?	d) no significant differences
2. Do HS children in Transition classrooms exhibit more positive attitudes toward school than HS children in Comparison classrooms?	no significant differences
3. Do HS children in Transition classrooms experience a smoother transition and better continuity of programming from HS to kindergarten and from one primary grade to the next than HS children in Comparison classrooms?*	evidence of more early childhood programming and focus on continuity at Transition schools
Families	
4. Do Transition families receive more social service support through the public school system and show more evidence of stability and self-sufficiency than Comparison families?	evidence of more services; no significant differences on stability or self-sufficiency
5. Do Transition families show better parenting skills and have more involvement in and support for education than Comparison families?	no significant differences
6. Do parents in Transition schools participate in and complete more literacy and English as a Second Language classes and workshops than parents in Comparison schools?	no significant differences

Summary of Findings...

...FROM TRANSITION PROJECT EVALUATION

Evaluation Question	Finding
7. Do parents in Transition schools perceive home-school communication to be more effective and satisfactory than parents in Comparison schools?	no significant differences
System	
8. Do Transition schools provide a more coordinated service delivery system (i.e., continuous and comprehensive) than Comparison schools?*	differences favor Transition schools
9. Do Transition schools provide a more developmentally appropriate curriculum, more satisfactory communication strategies, better staff development, and more opportunities for parent participation than Comparison schools?	differences on Developmentally Appropriate Practice favor Transition; no significant differences on communications; some differences on opportunities for parent participation favor Transition
10. Are Transition school primary level teachers more skilled in working with the special needs of at-risk children and families than Comparison school teachers?*	evidence of cultural and linguistic sensitivity in planning and implementation at Transition schools
11. What does a successful collaborative process look like?*	evidence of collaboration; barriers identified and collaborative strategies learned; positive experience promotes future collaboration
Policy	
12. Have the results of this Project affected state and local level policies and level of fiscal support that reflect a comprehensive plan for addressing child and family needs in a holistic manner?	not at completion of Project; however lessons learned from Transition Project will be applied to coalitions supporting child and family issues which may affect future policy

These questions rely on multiple data sources. Direct comparisons are not always possible as some data were not available for Comparison group schools.

Summary of Recommendations

INTERNAL POLICY (SERVICE DELIVERY) RECOMMENDATIONS

SWHD managers should revisit hiring, training, and supervising practices to determine whether they are sufficient to support their advocates' work. Some advocates under-utilized or were not uniformly familiar with some services, specifically those related to employability and employment.

Program managers should determine what is a working definition of an effective family advocate, what are expectations for advocates in responding to clients and supervisors, and what are the consequences for advocates who do not prove effective. These steps will help satisfy increased demands for program accountability.

Future program managers should determine which parents are most likely to participate at a high level, and then keep records of service provision and intensity to uncover reasons behind results. This will help programs make the best use of available services.

Program managers should continue to seek better service continuity for families and teachers. One positive strategy may be "looping," which keeps a teacher and advocate with the same set of students (and families) through more than one grade level before looping them back to an earlier grade to pick up a new set of students.

Managers should reconsider how advocates allocate time. Although paperwork and meetings are essential, an effective balance must be struck between time spent on administrative tasks and time spent providing direct service. The goal should be to maximize staff contact with families.

PUBLIC POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

RFP evaluation processes and standards should be reformed to favor programs that provide intensive services.

Program designs should focus on attainable goals.

Accountability for results should be the cornerstone of new program designs and evaluation.

The value of large-scale demonstration projects must be weighed against the expense and associated threats to validity.

Future HHS research should focus on determining the long-term effects of the Head Start Program, not solely on new demonstration projects.

New programs should align their goals with Welfare-to-Work reforms.

Appendix A

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Appendix A SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

A Developmentally Appropriate Practice Template (ADAPT): This instrument was designed in 1995 by M. Gottlieb of the Illinois Transition Project evaluation to measure dimensions of teaching and learning associated with developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood classrooms. After an hour of observation, eighteen descriptors are each rated on a five-point continuum to assess three domains of classroom practice: curriculum and instruction, interaction, and classroom management. In addition specific criteria are used to complete an overall classroom summary.

Assessment Profile for Early Childhood Programs: This classroom profile is intended to provide a quantitative measure of classrooms and teaching practices as they reflect developmentally appropriate practice. The Research Version used in this study includes 91 criteria organized into six scales: availability of learning materials, learning environment, scheduling, curriculum, interacting, and individualizing. Observation involves noting physical characteristics of the room and interactions between the teacher and the students. Each item is scored either "Yes" (observed) or "No" (not observed or not observed consistently). This instrument was developed in 1992 and modified in 1995 by M. Abbott-Shim & A. Sibley who were the Alabama Transition Project evaluators.

Child Health Questionnaire: Teachers and parents rate the child's general health and well-being. The parent questionnaire was part of the family interview. Teachers also completed a similar questionnaire each year.

Child Writing Samples: A writing sample from children during second and third grade was added to the national core data base in 1995. A specific writing "prompt" was developed at the national level, and local test administrators gave each child the writing task during their annual spring testing. Writing samples were scored by the testing company, Measurement, Inc. Scores reflected student performance on the following five elements: Focus; support/elaboration; organization; conventions/mechanics; integration/global rating of effectiveness.

Family Background and Update: This information is initially collected in the Fall family interview, with select items followed-up each Spring. Items relate to family demographics, socioeconomic factors, family characteristics, and support services the family received.

Family Involvement in Children's Learning: This instrument was developed at the national level in 1995 with input from the project site evaluators. Questions relate to school involvement and communications (school-family relationships) and family support for children's learning (in the home).

Family Resource Scale (FRS): This instrument is designed to measure the extent to which different types of resources are adequate in households with young children. The scale includes 30 items rank-ordered from most-to-least basic. The FRS was developed by H. Leet & C. Dunst in 1985 and is based upon research on family systems theory which posits that needs drive behavior, and since these needs can be arranged in order from most to least important, family emphasis is likely to be directed to meeting unmet needs that are high in the hierarchy (i.e., the most basic). Parents respond using a five-point rating scale designating 1) not at all adequate, to 5) almost always adequate.

Family Services End-of-Year Summary: This locally developed form, completed by Transition family advocates at the end of each year, includes a summary of the number of contacts made with Transition families, the number of referrals made, and the number of hours parents have documented for working with their child at home on school work and volunteering for or participating in school activities.

Final Interview for Families: This instrument was developed at the national level to provide an indication of the level of family need for services, whether families received needed services, and where they obtained the service. This instrument was administered at the last family interview, and both Transition and Comparison families were asked about their need for and use of 30 services for children and adults.

Focus Groups: Focus groups are small discussion groups designed to obtain information about the perspectives of various project participants and stakeholders toward the Transition Project. An interview protocol consisting of eight to ten open-ended questions is developed for each group, with the discussion loosely following the question outline. Participants are encouraged to engage in exchange of ideas and to explore various aspects of the project in depth.

Innovations Component Checklist: Three separate checklists were developed according to the guidelines for constructing them provided by Hall and Hord (1987). They are part of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model for assessing the change process. Each instrument describes the components of an innovation, such as Transition services, and three levels of implementation, from no implementation to full implementation. Program participants (teachers and family advocates) then rate the degree to which they believe the program is being implemented. Teachers complete a checklist on developmentally appropriate practice and Transition services; Family Advocates complete a checklist rating Transition services.

Local Family Interview Questions: The local interview questions were designed to supplement the national family interview by asking questions directly related to transition services and local evaluation questions. Items included whether services were available to families, whether they were accessed, and whether they were adequate. One set of questions was asked of both Transition and Comparison families; another set of questions relating directly to Transition services was asked only of Transition families through 1994. After the development of Family Involvement in Children's Learning instrument in 1995, the more general questions were dropped and Transition service related questions were asked only of the Transition families.

Parenting Dimensions Inventory: The PDI was developed by M. Slater and T. Power in 1987 and is based on a multi-dimensional model of parenting which integrates hierarchically organized concepts drawn from the parenting literature. The hierarchy attempts to account for the parent-child relationship on a continuum that ranges from abstract constructs of parenting through behaviors that characterize daily interactions. Four of the eight dimensions of the PDI are included in the family interview: nurturence, responsiveness to child input, nonrestrictive attitude, and consistency.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R): This test is designed to measure a person's receptive (i.e., hearing) vocabulary for Standard American English. It can be used with individuals ages 2 through 40 who understand Standard English to some degree. Each item consists of a choice of four pictures. The examiner names one and the child points to the picture named. Items are arranged in order of increasing difficulty and only the range of items appropriate to a person's abilities is given.

Program Implementation Profile (PIP): The PIP was developed in 1996 by the National Head Start Public School Transition Demonstration Project directors for use at the local site level. Project directors developed this instrument to allow sites to rate themselves in terms of the degree of program implementation. Project directors believed this instrument was needed to augment the annual site visits and the implementation ratings developed by the national research coordinating team. In 1996, each of the 31 Transition Project sites completed 2 PIPs: One completed by the Project director alone and one completed by a committee of Project participants from various roles in Transition which was consensus driven.

School Climate Survey: This instrument is designed to assess the quality and satisfaction of the school environment from teacher, student, and parent perspectives. In this study, it was given to the teachers and parents and adapted for principals as well. Published in 1987, the authors (E. Kelley, E. Howard, S. Miller, N. Schmitt, and J. Keefe) intended it to be used to foster school improvement. Nine of the instrument's subscales were used in this study: teacher-student relationships; security and maintenance; administration; student academic orientation; student behavioral values; student-peer relationships; parent & community relationships; instructional management; and, student activities.

Social Skills Rating System: This system is designed to assess student social behavior. The SSRS provides a social skills rating based on norms from a national sample of over 4,000 children ages three through 18. The system is divided into subscales of cooperation, assertion, self-control, and responsibility. Parents and teachers rate individual children on how frequently they exhibit each of the 38 social behaviors. They also rate how important those behaviors are to them as parents and teachers. This instrument was developed by F. Gresham, & S. Elliot in 1990.

Survey of Collaboration: This locally developed instrument was designed to obtain individual perspectives about collaboration between the Transition partners. Completed by family advocates, teachers, and principals, it contains 20 items which are grouped into three categories: Project Mission and Vision (7 items); Project Development and Organization (7 items); and characteristics of Key Leaders (6 items). A five point scale was used, where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. This survey was adapted from a survey designed by the Portland, Oregon Transition Project evaluators. Items are based upon partnership evaluation and collaboration concepts.

Teacher Rating of Students: This rating system was developed by the evaluators of the Illinois Transition Project and adapted for use in the Arizona evaluation. The purpose of the measure is to obtain teacher judgments about student progress in eight areas of skill and adjustment to school. Ratings were made each Spring. The following eight areas were rated: self-esteem, cooperative learning, physical development, family support, interest in literacy, language development, comfort in school environment, and logical/scientific/mathematical thinking. Teachers rated each child on each area using a four-point scale: 1) requires considerable development; 2) needs some development; 3) generally a positive area; and 4) strongly positive area.

Test de Vocabulario en Imagenes Peabody (TVIP): This test is the Spanish-language, Hispanic-American adaptation of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised (PPVT-R). It measures an individual's receptive, or hearing, vocabulary for single Spanish words and shows the extent of Spanish vocabulary acquisition. Test construction and administration are the same as the PPVT-R.

What I Think of School: On this instrument, developed by M. Reid and S. Landesman in 1988, children report their own perceptions of their early school experiences through engaging in a dialogue with the examiner. Eight key questions are asked about the child's attitude toward school. Children indicate their responses by pointing to choices on a rating card. The three-point scale ranges from 1) least positive response, to 3) most positive response. The instrument can be used with children ages four to eight.

Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement-Revised (WJ-R): This battery of tests measures cognitive abilities, scholastic aptitudes, and achievement. It can be used with individuals at all levels of education, preschool through adult. Four of the nine subtests included in the Standard Battery are used in the Transition study: WJ-22, letter-word identification; WJ-23, passage comprehension; WJ-24, calculation; and WJ-25, applied problems.

Your Child's Adjustment to School: This instrument was included in the Family Interview. Developed by M. Reid and S. Landesman in 1988, this instrument asks parents to rate eight school adjustment related items on a scale from zero to ten.

Appendix B

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Comparison School Practices and Services as of 1996

Program or Service	Balsz School	Longview School	Papago School
Education Programs	• Head Start preschool on-site • 1 part-time school psychologist • 1 full time counselor • Meet-The-Teacher Night each Fall • Carousel of Creativity	• Head Start preschool on-site • 1 full-time school psychologist • 2 full-time counselors (1 is bilingual) • Early Childhood Coordinating • Committee works on transition activities • Kindergarten Round-Up • Family Night • School tours for Head Start children • Work Sampling portfolio • Exchange between Head Start and kindergarten teachers	• Head Start preschool on-site • At-risk preschool • 1 full-time school psychologist • 4-year state restructuring grant with focus on DAP • CLIP reading tutoring • Curriculum Night • Bi-monthly school newsletter
Social Services	• 1 social service worker, 1 day per week • Sexual assault education program • DES-sponsored before/after school care • ESL/GED classes twice weekly on campus	• 1 full-time social worker • 1 ASU. social work intern (2 days/week) • Hispanic & Native American parent liaisons/ home visits • Native American Center • ESL classes at school • Parent support groups	• 1 full-time social worker • 1 community service worker • Numerous collaborative • Relationships with local agencies • ESL classes on campus • GED classes available through high school district
Health Services	• 1 full-time school nurse • Health Safari Van visits periodically • Referrals for glasses • Immunizations, other health services	• School-based health clinic run by • St. Joseph's Hospital provides primary care to students who qualify • 1 full-time school nurse • 1 full-time health aide (LPN) • 1 nurse practitioner (daily visits) • Transportation and assistance with medical visits	• 1 full-time school nurse • Referral sources for orthopedic services, glasses, and braces • Dental screenings every other year through mobile dental unit
Parent Involvement	• Booster Club • Parent representatives on School Articulation Committee • Bi-annual Parent-Teacher Conferences • Reading is Fundamental program for parents and first grade children	• PTA • Native American Parent Group • Bi-annual Parent-Teacher conferences • Monthly Kindergarten Family Nights • Planning site-based management team	• PTA • Site-Based Management Team • Participatory Management Team • Bi-annual Parent Teacher conferences • 2-year federal grant for increasing parent involvement • Homework Hotline • Weekly student academic checklist sent with each child • Parenting workshops on campus • Parent component of CLIP tutoring program
Partnerships	• Phoenix Police Officer on campus daily (Project D.A.R.E.) • Phoenix Fire Dept. Urban Safety Program weekly visits • Motorola partnership provides speakers and sponsors Whiz Kids reading program	• Denny's, Sizzler award dinners for parent volunteers • West Side Food Bank vouchers • Bar S Corporation partnership provides tutors, gives employment preference to Longview parents, pays rent on condo for 1 family • Parenting classes through • Parents Anonymous • Grant application in process for coordination of community services	• Collaborative relationships with: Phoenix Fire Department Phoenix Police Department Project D.A.R.E. Jewish Family Center Job Search Friendly House American Cancer Society Pilot Parents

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Appendix C

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TABLE 2.1: STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FOUND FROM 1993 – 1996

INSTRUMENT	SPRING 93	SPRING 94	SPRING 95	SPRING 96
CHILD OUTCOMES				
WJ 24 (calculation)	Cohort 1, Favoring T, p < .001	Cohort 1, Favoring C, p < .01 (gain score)	No differences	No differences
WJ 25 (applied problems)	Cohort 1, Favoring T, p < .05	Cohort 2, Favoring T, p < .05	Cohort 2 Differences initially appear to favor C, but no longer exist when covaried with language	No differences
WJ 22 (letter word recognition)	No differences	No differences	Cohort 1 Differences initially appear to favor C, but no longer exist when covaried with language Cohort 2 Differences are due to language spoken (covariate effects)	Cohort 1 Differences are due to language spoken (covariate effects) Cohort 2 Differences initially appear to favor C, but no longer exist when covaried with language
WJ 23 (passage comprehension)	No differences	No differences	Cohort 2 Differences are due to language spoken (covariate effects)	Cohort 2 Differences initially appear to favor C, but no longer exist when covaried with language
PPVT R (vocabulary)	Cohort 1, Favoring Transition, p < .05	Cohort 1, Favoring T (English speaking students only), p < .05 Cohort 2, Favoring T/C over A, p < .05	Cohort 2 A is significantly lower than T or C, p < .01	Cohort 1 Differences initially appear to favor C, but no longer exist when covaried with language
What I Think of School	No differences	Cohort 2, Favoring T Item: How much do you like school? p < .05	No differences	Cohort 1 Favoring T over A on one item "How well do you get along with other children at school?" p < .05
Your Child's Adjustment to School	Cohort 1, Favoring T Items: 4. How well does your child get along with teacher? 8. How would you rate your child's overall adjustment to school? (p < .05)	No differences	No differences	No differences
Teacher Rating of Students	No differences	Cohort 1, Favoring T Items: Cooperative learning, literacy p < .01 Items: Self esteem, language, comfort in school, logical/mathematical thinking p < .05 Cohort 2, Favoring T Item: Family involvement, p < .01	No differences	Cohort 2, Favoring T Items: Physical development, language, logical thinking, p < .05
FAMILY OUTCOMES				
Family Resource Scale	No differences	No differences	No family data analyzed by treatment group in 1995	Cohort 1, Favoring C Item: Do you have adequate heat for house? p < .005
Receiving Public Assistance	No differences	No differences		Cohort 1 & 2, Favoring A Item: WIC nutrition program p < .05 Cohort 2, Favoring A Item: Medical assistance p < .05
Family Involvement in Children's Learning	No differences	No differences		Cohort 1 & 2, Favoring T Item: Average number of school based activities/events offered & average number attended. Average number of school related volunteer opportunities p < .005 Favoring T Item: Rules for your child about TV viewing? p < .05 Cohort 2, Favoring T Items: Average number of volunteer opportunities attended. Anything preventing you from participating in child's school? Has child's teacher suggested home activities to work on together? p < .05

KEY: T = Transition, C = Comparison, A = Attrition, K = Kindergarten, p = probability that the result was obtained by chance alone. Shading in column for 1995 designates that the instrument was not analyzed that year.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

TABLE 2.1: STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FOUND FROM 1993 – 1996 (CONT.)

INSTRUMENT	SPRING 93	SPRING 94	SPRING 95	SPRING 96
CHILD OUTCOMES (cont.)				
Local Family Interview	Data not statistically analyzed in 1993	Cohort: 2. Favoring: T Items: School given you chance to develop parenting skills? Have chance to talk with teacher about child's needs/qualities?: p = .01 Items: Know where to go/who to ask about social, health, community services? Does school ask your opinion about school policy, classroom? (p = .05)		Data not statistically analyzed in 1996
SYSTEM OUTCOMES				
School Survey of Early Childhood programs (average ratings by teachers)	Cohort: 1, teachers. Favoring: T Item: 11. Total Score p = .001 Items: 1, 4, 6, 9, 10, 12 p = .01 Items: 2, 5, 8, p = .05	Cohort: 1, teachers. Favoring: T Item: 5 p = .01 Items: 6, 9, 10, 12 p = .05 Favoring: C. Item: 7 p = .05		No differences
Assessment Profile (DAP in classrooms)	Cohort: 1. Favoring: T Subscales: (1 out of 5) Interacting p = .01	Data not made available to the local sites	Favoring: T classrooms on five of six scales: Availability of learning materials: Learning environment Curriculum: Interacting (All significant at p = .01); Individualizing (p = .02) (see Table 3.4)	Favoring: T classroom Scales: Learning environment Curriculum p = .001 Scale: Availability of learning materials p = .05
ADAPT	Not administered	Not administered	Favoring: T classrooms on all three areas: Curriculum & instruction Interaction, and Classroom management and total score p = .0001 (see Table 3.5)	Favoring: T classroom Scales: Curriculum & instruction Interaction: Classroom management total score p = .005

KEY: T = Transition; C = Comparison; A = Attrition; K = Kindergarten; p = probability that the result was obtained by chance alone; Shading in column for 1995 designates that the instrument was not analyzed that year.

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TABLE 2.2: SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS ACCORDING TO TREATMENT GROUP – LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS

EVALUATION QUESTION	INSTRUMENT AND ANALYSIS	FINDINGS	p <
QUESTIONS ABOUT CHILDREN			
Do Head Start (HS) children in Transition classrooms maintain and/or show gains to a greater degree than HS children in Comparison classrooms in cognitive skills?	• WJ broad reading and math Rasch Wright scores and PPVT standard scores from kindergarten to grade 3 • Repeated Measures ANOVA	Reading Means – No differences Spring K: T=392.5 C=395.3 Spring 3: T=474.0 C=477.9 Math Means: Spring K: T=411.1 C=409.7 Spring 3: T=478.2 C=483.7 PPVT Means: Spring K: T=71.0 C=74.5 Spring 3: T=97.3 C=96.7	— .002 .05
	• Difference scores – 3rd grade – Spring K math /reading PPVT	No differences	—
	• Difference scores – 3rd grade – Spring K math/reading PPVT – using Language as variable	Math difference by Language English: 57.5 Non English: 65.8 PPVT difference by Language English: 15.8 Non English: 23.4	.02 .0001
Do HS children in Transition classrooms maintain and/or show gains to a greater degree than HS children in Comparison classrooms in social skills and emotional development?	• Family Interview: *Social Skills Rating System & Problem Behaviors* • Repeated Measures ANOVA – K thru grade 3 • Teacher Questionnaire: *Social Skills Rating System & Problem Behaviors* – grade 3 • ANOVA	Parent version: No differences Teacher version: Externalizing means: T=3.9 C=2.5 Total Standard score for Behavior Problems: T=107.1 C=101.3	 .03 .04
Do HS children in Transition classrooms maintain and/or show gains to a greater degree than HS children in Comparison classrooms in general health?	• Family Interview: Child health questions: General health; medical home; insurance; hyperactive diagnosis; Rx to control behavior; speech problems; frequency of dental visits • Frequencies; Chi Square; Means; ANOVA – grade 3	No differences for T vs C Difference between T vs A: Average frequency of dental visits: T=1.4 C=1.5 A=1.9 (scale: 1=once/year; 2=every 2 years; 3=less)	 .02
Do HS children in Transition classrooms maintain and/or show gains to a greater degree than HS children in Comparison classrooms in adjustment to school?	• Family Interview: *Your Child's Adjustment to School and Additional Items* • Repeated Measures ANOVA	Transition and Attrition groups differ significantly on 3 items (see Table 2.3)	.05
Do HS children in Transition classrooms exhibit more positive attitudes toward school than HS children in Comparison classrooms?	• Child Instrument: *What I Think of School* • Repeated measures ANOVA from 1993 to 1996	No differences – uniformly high ratings with little variance.	—
Do HS children in Transition classrooms experience a smoother transition and better continuity of programming from HS to kindergarten and from one primary grade to the next than HS children in Comparison classrooms?	• *School Survey of Early Childhood Programs* – teacher, principals • *Your Child's Adjustment to School* • Focus group data • Observation of program activities, meetings, classrooms • Inference based upon triangulation of multiple data sources	Transition teachers reported more continuity in program components than Comparison teachers. No differences in children's adjustment. Continuity and transition activities were improved through collaborative efforts among Head Start and public school staff. Parents indicated that family advocates provided a link between the school and the parents.	
QUESTIONS ABOUT FAMILIES			
Do Transition families receive more social service support through the public school system and show more evidence of stability and self sufficiency than Comparison families?	• Family Interview: *Family Resource Scale* • Repeated Measures ANOVA • Family Interview: *Family Use of Public Assistance Programs* • ANOVA *1993 1996* • *Final Family Interview* • Repeated Measures ANOVA • Risk Factor Index • ANOVA	Differences between T vs C on 1 of 9 resources from K–3: Differences between T/C vs A on 7 of 9 resources at grade 3: (see Table 2.5) No significant differences Differences between T vs C on 4 areas of need Differences between T vs C on 2 needs met Differences between T vs C on school/Transition providing service on 9 areas of need (see Table 2.4) No differences	.04 .01 — .01 .05 —

KEY: T=Transition; C=Comparison; A=Attrition; K=Kindergarten; Underlining designates the group favored by the analysis; p < = probability that the result was obtained by chance alone. Shaded rows designate questions about systematic issues, and data are not technically longitudinal.

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TABLE 2.2: SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS ACCORDING TO TREATMENT GROUP – LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS (CONT.)

EVALUATION QUESTION	INSTRUMENT AND ANALYSIS	FINDINGS	p <
QUESTIONS ABOUT FAMILIES (cont...)			
Do Transition families show better parenting skills and have more involvement and support for education than Comparison families?	• Family Interview: *Parenting Dimensions Inventory* • Repeated Measures ANOVA	No differences	—
	• *Family Involvement in Children's Learning* • Repeated measures ANOVA	Differences between T vs C on 1 item Sum of activities school offered	.001
		Differences between T vs A on Sum of activities attended Sum of volunteer opportunities offered Sum of opportunities participated in	.0001
Do parents in Transition schools participate in and complete more literacy and ESL classes and workshops than parents in Comparison schools?	• Family Interview: *Family Background – enrollment in education programs* • Frequencies: Chi Square	No differences between groups for enrollment in literacy or ESL programs	—
Do parents in Transition schools perceive home school communication to be more effective and satisfactory than parents in Comparison Schools?	• Family Interview: *School Climate Survey* Parents, teachers, principals • *Family Involvement in Children's Learning* • ANOVA	No differences No differences	— —
QUESTIONS ABOUT SYSTEMIC CHANGE			
Do Transition schools provide a more coordinated service delivery system (i.e., continuous and comprehensive) than Comparison schools?	• *Final Family Interview* • ANOVA • *Innovation Components Checklist* - Means • Focus group data • Observation / documentation of Transition team process • Inference made based upon triangulation of multiple data sources	More Transition families received services through the school than Comparison families. Teachers and family advocates rated services to parents highly. Focus group participants described coordinating efforts and offering comprehensive services. The Project's efforts to make services continuous were viewed as more difficult to accomplish with changes in staffing and moving up through the grades.	
Compared to Comparison schools, do Transition schools provide: • a more developmentally appropriate curriculum? • more satisfactory communication strategies with teachers and Head Start staff? • better staff development? • more opportunities for parent participation?	• Assessment Profile • ANOVA 1993 – 1997 • ADAPT • ANOVA 1995 – 1997 • Observation /documentation of Transition team process • *Survey of Collaboration* • Focus Groups • *Family Involvement in Children's Learning* • ANOVA	Differences in DAP favoring T consistently (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5) Survey of Collaboration and focus group data indicate that communication was improved. Focus group data support the benefits of staff development provided. Transition parents report more opportunities for involvement offered than Comparison parents.	.01 .001
Compared to Comparison school teachers, are Transition school primary level teachers more skilled at working with the special needs of at risk families?	• *Survey of Collaboration* (item on cultural sensitivity) • Focus group data – Teachers, family advocates • ADAPT • ANOVA • *Assessment Profile* • ANOVA • Inference made based upon triangulation of multiple data sources	Survey of collaboration shows Transition teachers, family advocates and principals believed the Project considered culture, race, and ethnic differences when planning strategies and activities. Focus group data supportive of Project staff's ability and concern in meeting client needs. Linguistic support was described as central to Project's success. ADAPT and Assessment Profile show evidence that Transition teachers individualized to meet children's needs and were more culturally sensitive than Comparison teachers.	

KEY: T=Transition; C=Comparison; A=Attrition; K=Kindergarten; Underlining designates the group favored by the analysis; p < = probability that the result was obtained by chance alone. Shaded rows designate questions about systemic issues, and data are not technically longitudinal.

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TABLE 2.2: SUMMARY OF EVALUATION FINDINGS ACCORDING TO TREATMENT GROUP – LONGITUDINAL ANALYSIS (CONT.)

EVALUATION QUESTION	INSTRUMENT AND ANALYSIS	FINDINGS	p <
QUESTIONS ABOUT SYSTEMIC CHANGE (cont.)			
Based upon data gathered through case studies: • what are effective strategies and practices for collaboration? • is a model for change developed and disseminated to other Transition sites? • what does a successful collaboration look like? (i.e., was the Transition Project a successful collaboration?)	• Case studies • Observation/documentation of Transition team process • *Surveys of Collaboration* • Inference made based upon triangulation of multiple data sources	Case studies and evaluator observation of the Project's evolution support the finding that SWHD and the schools learned barriers to collaboration as well as strategies to maintain relationships and retain the focus of the collaboration (see text, Chapters 3 and 4). A model for implementing a Transition program was developed and disseminated by SWHD. Surveys of Collaboration throughout Project were generally high (average 3.8 out of 5). Case studies, observation, and other local data provide evidence that, to the extent that it represented a true collaborative effort, the Transition Project collaboration was successful.	
QUESTION RELATED TO POLICY			
Did the results of this project affect state and local level policies and the level of fiscal support that reflect a comprehensive plan for addressing child and family needs in a holistic manner?	Monitor state and local level policies related to early childhood education.	No district policies were changed as a result of Transition. No state level policy changes directly attributable to Transition; However, SWHD personnel are regular participants in local and state level organizations, coalitions, and other forums advocating policies that are comprehensive and positive for children and families. They now bring experience from the Transition Project to these discussions.	

KEY: T=Transition; C=Comparison; A=Attrition; K=Kindergarten; Underlining designates the group favored by the one; p = probability that the result was obtained by chance alone; Shaded rows designate questions about systemic issues, and data are not technically longitudinal

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TABLE 2.10: ADDITIONAL ANALYSIS CONDUCTED WITHOUT REGARD TO TREATMENT GROUP

QUESTION	INSTRUMENT AND ANALYSIS	FINDINGS	p *
What factors predict differences in third grade math scores?	• Woodcock Johnson (WJ) broad math Rasch Wright scores • Multiple regression*	• Spring Kindergarten broad reading score accounts for 20% of variance • Spring Kindergarten broad math score accounts for 6% of variance	.0001 .0001
What factors predict differences in third grade reading scores?	• WJ broad reading Rasch Wright scores • Multiple regression	• Spring Kindergarten broad math score accounts for 33% of variance	.0001
What factors predict differences in third grade Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test scores?	• Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test – Standard Scores • Multiple regression	• Kindergarten broad math score accounts for 25% of variance	.0001
What factors predict differences in third grade social skills as rated by parents?	• Family Interview, *Social Skills Rating System & Problem Behaviors* • Multiple regression	Social Skills subscales: Cooperation: Number of risks predicts 7% and language first tested in predicts 9% of variance Responsibility: Number of risks predicts 8% of variance Assertion: No variables predict variance Self control: No variables predict variance Problem Behaviors– Externalizing: Number of risks predicts 7% of variance Internalizing: No variables predict variance Hyperactivity: No variables predict variance	.0004 .002 .003 — — .008 — —
What factors predict differences in third grade social skills as rated by teachers?	• Teacher Questionnaire, *Social Skills Rating System & Problem Behaviors* • Multiple regression	Social Skills subscales: Cooperation: K reading score predicts 13% of variance Assertion: No variables predict variance Self control: No variables predict variance Problem Behaviors– Externalizing: No variables predict variance Internalizing: K reading score predicts 11% of variance Number of risks predicts 20% of variance Hyperactivity: Language first tested in predicts 11% of variance	.003 — — — .005 .008 .006
Do children in Transition classrooms who score in the top and the bottom 20% at third grade differ on any variables in a systematic way?	• WJ broad reading and math Rasch Wright scores • ANOVA – variables included those identified for multiple regression analysis *Number of subjects is small: 14 in each group. Shows a trend but cannot be considered reliable.	On Math, grade 3 (TOP / BOTTOM) Family Involvement 11.1 / 8.4 K Math 431.8 / 414.6 On Reading, grade 3 Family Involvement 12.3 / 9.2 K Math 427.7 / 414.5 K Reading 395.9 / 383.2	.04 .007 .002 .03 .008
Do all children, whether in T or C classrooms, who score in the top and the bottom 20% at third grade differ on any variables in a systematic way?	• WJ broad reading and math Rasch Wright scores • ANOVA – variables included those identified for multiple regression analysis	On Math, grade 3 (TOP / BOTTOM) K Math 425.6 / 411.5 K Reading 399.3 / 386.5 On Reading, grade 3 Family Involvement 11.7 / 9.2 K Math 426.7 / 412.6 K Reading 401.3 / 383.1	.0001 .002 .03 .002 .0001
Do the number of risks families have differ by treatment group?	• Locally developed risk index** • ANOVA	No differences	—
Do scores of Attrition group children differ by original treatment group or confound results in any way?	• WJ broad reading and math Rasch Wright scores • Repeated Measures ANOVA	No differences	—
Does primary language interact with children's achievement scores and confound the results of Transition / Comparison group analysis?	• WJ broad reading and math Rasch Wright scores and PPVT scores • ANOVA	Only difference favors non English dominant speakers on difference from K to third grade math scores (See Table 2.9)	.02

KEY: T=Transition, C=Comparison, A=Attrition, K=Kindergarten, p = = probability that the result was obtained by chance alone

* For all multiple regressions shown, potential predictor variables included: Treatment group, time in treatment, first language, Family Involvement score, *Family Resource Scale* score, Kindergarten WJ Math and reading Rasch Wright score, family income at entry, school, Risk Index score.

**Risk Index=(care giver education, teen parent, care giver depression, poverty, AFDC, SSI, 4 + children, 1 adult in home, *Family Resource Scales* (time, money subscales), frequent moves, ESL)

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Southwest Human Development (SWHD), a non-profit educational and human services organization, operates 36 federally funded Head Start classrooms in Central Phoenix. The agency also provides other comprehensive services to young children and families who face challenges related to health, abuse and neglect, mental health, poverty and disabilities. Today, SWHD is the largest community-based group of its type in Arizona.

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The Arizona Head Start-Public School Transition Project was funded under a grant to Southwest Human Development from the Administration for Children, Youth and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This research was conducted by Morrison Institute under contract with Southwest Human Development, Phoenix, Arizona.

Photos courtesy of: Southwest Human Development and the Terauds, Mulholland, and Higgins families.

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